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# Femme Fatales



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# LEXX

## DARK ZONE ADVENTURES

PLOT OF THE SEXY SPACE OPERA IS PUNCTURED WITH BLACK HOLES.

BY IAN JOHNSTON

The pilot episode for **LEXX: THE DARK ZONE STORIES** is an entertaining mix of sci-fi, '90s cynicism, computer effects, cheesy costumes, wit, gore, a breathless pace and more plot twists than necessary.

The Showtime science fiction/dark comedy series—which will be episodically served-up as four 2-hour movies—relates the familiar pulp tale of four fugitive space travellers. Clad in uncomfortable looking outfits, they steal the Lexx—aka the universe's most powerful space ship—from a tyrannical ruler who's own wardrobe looks like a shoe-in for **LET'S MAKE A DEAL**. The series will debut in July on The Movie Channel, as **TALKS FROM A PARALLEL UNIVERSE**.

Created and directed by Paul Donovan, who previously helmed the low-budget movies **DEF CON 4** and **NORMANICUS**, the **LEXX** series is more perverse **BUCK ROGERS** than **STAR TREK**. Though the characters occasionally do the right thing, it's usually because of fear and bodily urges, not loyalty to a prime directive.

The pilot episode opens with a bang; the planet Brunnis' dragonfly spaceships wage a hopeless battle with a jumbo, satellite-fryin' spaceship, His Shadow, a cloaked miscreant who literally kills his competition, is at the helm of the killer craft. Kotten to the core, he stabs Kai—the final survivor of Brunnis—in his lar. It's a marvelous overture, setting the mood with styl-

ish computer animation, clever action and wonderfully purple prose.

Fast-forward 2,000 years and we meet Stanley Tweedle (a twitchy Brian Downey), a meek docking guard who toils on The Cluster, the crumbling 'planetoid central' of His Shadow's power. It's a ruthless place, where even a nominal infraction means an involuntary donation to the organ bank. Naturally, Tweedle immediately breaks a rule, and must decide between dismemberment or flight, choosing the latter, he's reluctantly abetted by convict Zev (Eva Habermann), formerly a felonious, butt-ugly blimp who was sentenced to transformation into beautiful sex slave. She's ravishing alright, but her slide into submission was derailed by a technical glitch (a hungry cluster lizard stuck its head into the transformation machine during transmission). Result: Zev was "reborn" into a hostile, hybridized reptilian sex slave with blue hair and short skirt.

Helping them out—inadvertently—

Zev, a love slave with a Cluster Lizard's personality. "She was a lot, ugly woman," says Eva Habermann. "She's now beautiful, but feels the same inside."



Episode #2, dating *Future*: Stan (Brian Downey) bonds with Whet (Doreen Jacobi), an adduct inhabitant of Kaskya, the planet composed of garbage.

is Thodin (Barry Bostwick), a rebel prisoner who's critical to **LEXX**'s best sequence, the big guy manages an escape by extricating a bug smart bomb from his nose (stop motion effects by David Albiston). The bug cruises into The Cluster, damages electrical systems and facilitates Zev and Stan's escape by embroiling the planetoid in chase.

Unfortunately, **LEXX** never tops this galvanizing exposition. Sure, there's several funny sequences, but it all feels a bit like aimless padding, climaxed with the predictable showdown between His Shadow and a resurrected Kai.

Pilot episodes often burn-out on "overload", and **LEXX** is no exception. After a premiere screening, the production personnel retreated to the editing room and delivered tighter scenes. But the show is still mired in auxiliary characters and plot threads that won't be addressed till later episodes.

The script written by Donovan, with assistance by Jeff Hirschfield and Lex Gigeroff, is a dalliance of

continued on page 80

# F A T A L E

●Word on the street is that actress Wendy Schumacher has changed her name to Alexander Keith. Says the *PF* centerfold (58), "I'm really anxious to move on from doing erotic thrillers, and start doing achievement movies. I wanted a new name to go with my new persona."

Own a satellite dish? Check out the B-Movie Channel, which debuted February 7th on Galaxy 4, Transponder 13. The aforementioned Ms. Keith hosted *SWAMP WOMEN*, Roger Corman's 1955 bayou-witch epic which jump-started the network's feature presentations. "It was great," says Keith. "The people at the B-Movie Channel have got a great idea, and I'm happy to be a part of it."

Actresses Michelle Bauer (42) and Vanessa Taylor (37) are also scheduled to host drive-in classics. "There are some wonderful B-movies out there," says Taylor. "I, personally, would love to translate something like *BRIDGES OF MADISON COUNTY* into a B-movie because you're afforded some latitude with characterization. B-movies are traditionally experimental, lately, they've been stuck with a bad rap as a result of the link with exploitation. But have we forgotten the likes of *CARNIVAL OF SOULS*? The original *INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS*?"

The B-Movie Channel will make the leap from satellite to cable-TV on July 1st. Kristene Smith Seabron, the Channel's executive vice president, is speculating viewership to skyrocket from 8 million to 10 million households. The audience is incrementally expanding to Canada, the United Kingdom, et al.

Tap into the network's Website: [www.b-moviechannel.com](http://www.b-moviechannel.com).

●Nancy Allen—whose genre output includes the likes of *GARRETT, DRESSED TO KILL*, *BLOW OUT*, *STRANGE INVADERS* and the *ROBOCOP* trilogy—plays a punn role in *AGAINST THE LAW*, a shoot 'em-up scheduled for summer release. "Nancy's character, a news reporter, gets caught up in a situation," explains producer Jim Wynorski. "She's covering the live story about a crazy psycho [Richard Gere] who thinks he's Billy The Kid—you know, he goes up against the cops with a fast draw, and challenges people to showdowns and wins. Anyway, this psycho kidnaps Nancy and threatens to kill her if she doesn't continue to report on his story."

Allen's next assignment is *QUALITY TIME*, a sci-fi thriller.

●No sooner had we interviewed Tia Carrere for a forthcoming profile than—boom!—she signed-up for *DUMPEDD* Pamela Anderson Lee co-stars and—little notwithstanding—the film is not autobiographical (i.e. nothing to do with the *BARD WIRE* debacle). "It's about relationships!"

●Linnsey Quigley is not only starring in *HELL'S PARADISE*, but co-producing the "John Wu-style horror movie." Supporting cast includes Sheri Eckert, Cassandra Cline and Debbie Dutch. Quigley recently wrapped *BOOGIE BOY* for Road Dog Pictures, balance of the eclectic cast includes Tico Lords, Joan Jeff, Karen Lee Shepherd and Emily Lloyd. The premise involves



Scandal! *SHAMPOO* NORMS star Tiffany Shepis modeled for ads related to *NYMPHOMAD BARBARIAN IN DINOSAUR HELL* (7) and *MUNAC NURSES*. "Give it a rest! I posed for those pics 'cause I thought they would impress Bob Ross!"

something or another about biker junkies and a drug deal gone amuck. But a "we don't wanna talk about it" crisis was abruptly dropped on the script, and *Lords'* publicists are barring interviews with the actress until the film is in the can. Apparently, they're also afraid that the film may never see the pubing light of a movie projector, though writer/director Craig Hamann insists the innuendo is "hogwash."

Ms. Shepis, who was cast as an intoxicated heroin addict, claims "BOOGIE BOY was a blast! I just really had a ball with it. I was drunk throughout the whole movie. Drunk and out of it. Joan Jeff and all the actors were so cool."

●Tiffany Shepis, the previous issue's *PF* centerfold, was the toast of this year's Berlin

Film Festival. Her performance in *SHAMPOO* NORMS, produced by Spanish filmmaker Pedro Almodovar, earned rave reviews during its preview at the concourse. "The response has been amazing," enthuses Shepis. "It's been getting better notices than *THE ENGLISH PATIENT*! No less than eleven newspapers in Berlin have written about it!" Shepis subsequently flew to Spain for the film's world premiere. Several U.S. companies are competing for domestic release.

Shepis has also been cast in a full-length, CO-RDM movie! It's based on the true story of this wacko man who lost 125 pounds in a very short period of time, and wrote a book titled *How to Lose Weight by Yo-yo*. It turned out that he was a serious dope addict. I play a young, aspiring starlet named Theresa who goes to a weekend party at this guy's house, where he plays a lot of sick tricks on all of us. Since this involves pioneering technology, HBO is shooting a behind-the-scenes documentary."

By the time you read this sentence, Shepis will be shooting *THE ACCURSED* in Las Vegas (it's a comedy about the making of a B-horror film). In the meantime, keep an eye peeled for the Tiffany Shepis model kit. "It was sculpted by Joseph Lauderh and produced by Frank Devito, whose past collaborations include *Bette Page* and *Ray Harryhausen* creatures. I'm depicted as this sword swinger chick with a pet dragon. We'll keep you posted!"

We dug up a little bit of Shepis's past; turns out she's been putting a spin on some dirty laundry. Check-out the 2-year old photo on the left: Shepis—Ms. Big Shot, Ms. #1 with the cops—is protesting publication of her poster for exploitation movies, *NYMPHOMAD BARBARIAN IN DINOSAUR HELL* and *MUNAC NURSES*. "I'm not visible in either film, I only modeled for the ads. I was naive—[scooping] it was a desperate means for me to get Bob Ross's attention! I'm just hot for this multi-talented artist—He's still alive, right?"

Incidentally, artist Roc Fane has rendered Tiffany Shepis into *Dick Angel*, a stunning, sensuous watercolor printed in extremely limited edition. For info, drop a self-addressed & stamped envelope to: 305 Main Street, Wilmington, DE—19804 (FAX: 302-396 0420). Hey, inquire about Fane's renderings of *Blinka Stevens* (blonde of *Damnation & Desire's* *Answered*), both limited prints are co-signed by the actress.

●Formerly one of Gary Oldman's fanged disciples in *BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA*, Monica Bellucci (FF 1-3) is the likely candidate to play Pierce Brosnan's sidekick in the new 007 saga titled—depending on rumor—*ADULTERER*, *SHATTERHAND*, *AVATAR*, *SHAMELESS*, *ON HOT ICE*, *THE DREAM WEATHER*—or the likely drunkard, *TOMORROW NEVER DIES*. Also on board is Oriental superstar Michelle Yeh; she's cast as Lin Pao, a karate expert who becomes the superspy's ally when he arrives in *China Roger* (AIR AMERICA) Sportswearhouse directs.

●More absolutely news: Joanna Lumley, the

heroine of Hammer's SATANIC RITES OF DRACULA, is starring in SWEENEY TODD, a period chiller about the legendary, slash-happy barber of Fleet Street. It's currently shooting in Ireland with John Schlesinger at the helm.

●Rome correspondent Robert D'Onofrio reports, "NIRVANA, the most ambitious and most expensive science fiction film ever produced in Italy, premiered in theaters on January 24th. Directed by Oscar-winner Gabriele Salvatores, the film is a clever mix of BLADE RUNNER and BRAZIL. The protal character, Jimi [Christopher Lambert], creates a 3-D video game in the not-too-distant future. As the result of a virus infection, Solo [Oergo Astorini]—the 'Virtual hero' of Jimi's Nirvana game—realizes the recurrent inevitability of his future and death. He repeatedly experiences déjà-vu, and each life cycle concludes with the same old' epitaph—'Game Over. Solo begs Jimi for his freedom.

"The lascious Emmanuelle Seigner, actress (FRANTIC, BITTER MOON) and wife of director Roman Polanski, plays Jimi's ex-girlfriend; her thoughts and feelings are written on a 'Ayurvedic Microchip.' Other females fe-



Katharine Ross is symbolically cloned into one of THE STEPFOOD WIVES, finally debating on video. Dick Smith created the breast appliances, as well black sci-fi contacts (5) indicating Ross' unfinished android appearance.

tales include Stefanie Rocca as 'The Receptor,' Annalisa Santarelli (who often addresses Solo with, 'Do ya wanna fuck?'), and Loredana Zucanic.

"Salvatores admits that his film was partially influenced by sci-fi author Philip K. Dick, but the scenario was also prompted by a real-life experience. 'I was in India, near the river Ganges. Next to me, some children were playing Game Boy, an old Nintendo game. Those kids, flanked by hermits and religious images, were in the midst of people praying and dying. I was very impressed by these two worlds: the virtual reality and the Indian philosophy. The main character of the Nirvana game is forced to reincarnate himself every time the game ends. The only way for Solo to get out of this condemnation is to reach the Nirvana—it will be erased. It's a concept very close to the Oriental idea of reincarnation."

"The director is currently working on Nirvana: The Game, an interactive CD-ROM game that starts exactly where the film ends."

●Check-out our next issue for an interview with allying action star, Diana Pang (Pang Daan); she's on the ascent in her native Hong Kong and making the crossover into America. Credits include ANOTHER CHINESE COP, HONG KONG SHOWGIRLS, etc.

●The 22-year-old Romina Mondello, heroine

of Dario Argento's production IL TERRORE DELLA MASCHERA DI CERA (TERROR OF THE WAX MASK), is heir to the role previously played by heroines Fay Wray (MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM) and Phyllis Kirk (HOUSE OF WAX). Though the movie will introduce Mondello to the U.S., she's no stranger to European audiences; after all, the drop-dead beauty was featured in an Italian TV movie, LA PIVRA? (THE OCTOPUS, PART 7), "a profitable, never-ending story about the Mafia."

●One of our researchers, Jane Bernds, typically answers the oft-asked, 'What's chaotic' with Julia Pantofo. "She's billed as June Seuss in PAIN IS THE PRICE. I doubt this BAD bonanza, released late last year, will play at your local Blockbuster."

●She's the next millennium's incarnation of Pam Oner (77 5-2). "The name is Darling. DeJores Darling" (insert 90's music). "The 'Delores' character debuted in my self-published novel, An Excuse For Living," explains writer Jimmy Stroud, Jr. "The story of a woman seeking peace through insanity, it opened locally to favorable reviews." Stroud's femme fatale, embodied by the juicy Jade, is chronicles in cyberspace via Delores Darling. Bizarre-action Monthly (<http://www.deloresdarling.com>) Ms. Darling class "Sex in Three Easy Lessons" as one of her

internet vignettes. "It's the story of how I get revenge (sort of) when this stalker kills a prospective lover of mine (I hate it when that happens). This one earns a 'For Mature Readers' label and if you are (nearly) offended...well, don't read it."

●Twenty-two years after it's theatrical release, THE STEPFOOD WIVES—the sci-fi allegory about husbands and their life-size, synthetic Barbie Dolls—is finally debuting on the video market via Anchor Bay Entertainment. Company publicist Brendan Constantine notes, "We've transferred the film in its original aspect ratio (i.e., letterboxed). It's the first time that this classic has been made the transition to cassette." Based on the novel by Ira Levin, who also wrote Rosemary's Baby, the film's cast includes Katharine Ross, Paula Prentiss and Tina Louise. In the event you didn't spot 'em the first time around, keep an eye peeled for Joanna Cassidy and a 7-year-old Mary Stuart Masterson. The movie's cult appeal spawned a myriad of made-for-TV sequels.

●Canadian-Chinese actress Francoise Yip, who portrayed Jackie Chan's abettor in RUMBLE IN THE BRONX, is currently filming THE BLACK MASK, described as "a superhero romp, BATMAN-style," the film is directed by Andrew Lee on Indonesian locations.

Heard it on the grapevine, Stuart Gordon may be negotiating with Brianstorm Comic artist, Faive. It seems the SPACETRUCKERS/RE-ANIMATOR director would like to adapt her erotic comic book saga, Vampire (FF 56), into a live-action movie.

●Shari Eckert—described as "one of the new breed of B-movie divas—recently costarred with Carmen Electra in an EROTIC CONFESSIONS episode. "I was also cast in episodes of the EMMANUELLE television series with Krista Allen (FF 7 & 56)," she notes. "I play a high-class hooker." Eckert's '97 movie releases include BIONIC TRAFFIC SCHOOL, directed by Gary Graver (remember 1994's BIONIC DRIVE-IN? A beach bunny is her to a disheveled drive-in theatre, accompanying foreplay and a mob bust, the heroine and her clan of bikini-clad sun worshippers reopen the joint and generate big biz by wearing little more than G-strings and strips of genital flesh. Okay, substitute the drive-in theatre with a traffic school and that's pretty much the plot of BIONIC TRAFFIC SCHOOL. I can't believe that I just blew 10 lines on this recap, I need a life. Where was I?—Oh yeah, Eckert—back in March—was promoting REBEL ROCKIN' WEDDING at the American Film Market. "It's about a rockabilly band battling with drugs, alcohol and each other. I play Melaine, a band member's girlfriend who's strung out and watching her hands die." Between films, Eckert functions as a body double on the BAYWATCH series.

●FF cover woman Rebecca Penati (2-4) is among the venue of HOLLYWOOD STARLETS, a documentary produced by Hollywood staffers Tracy Gail (MIRIN HIGH) and Connie Spangler (DINDSAUR VALLEY GIRLS). "In addition to Rebecca, we've engaged other actresses for profiles," explains Spangler, "including Linnea Dreyfus, Cherie Jean (DRAGON FURY), Lauren Hays (TRIGGER HAPPY) and The Russian Madonnas, Natasha Alexanderova. We're distributed through Simlar (phone 1-800-466-0273)."

The Coauthors, Roberto D'Onofrio, Laura Schiff



L: Shari Eckart, who recently wrapped **HOT ROD HIGH** and **SKIN TRAFFIC SCHOOL**, is starring in **HELL'S PARADOX** (a John Wu-style horror film). R: Melissa Hotzday, recurrently visible on **RAYWATCH**, is cutting a mystical CD. B: Popstar pin-up Tracy Dall turns co-producer for the **HOLLYWOOD STARLETS**.



# Buffy, Vampire Slayer

SARA MICHELLE GELLAR IS THE HEROINE WHO  
BATTLES MONSTERS AND TEEN ANGST.

By DALE KUTZERA



Casting the title role for **BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER**, the TV producers chronicled a wish list: an actress who could project a penchant for drama, demonstrate a flair for comedy and wield an aptitude for vampire ass-whupping. They needed a youthful thespian who could squeeze into constrictive cheerleader togs, but externalize a meaner, more assertive attitude than the vacuous, eye-candy Kristi Swanson in the 1992 theatrical film. Well, they got their wish; her name is Sarah Michelle Gellar.

"There was no second place," said executive producer Joss Whedon. "We read tons of people and several were staggeringly untalented. Buffy is a tough part. It is a character actress in the part of a leading lady. This girl has to look the part of the blonde bimbo



1: Anthony Head as Giles, Gellar as Buffy, Nicholas Brendon as Xander.

who dies in reel two, and yet she's not that. Buffy is a very loopy, very funny, very strange person—kind of eccentric. Sarah has all those qualities and you don't find them in a beautiful, young girl very often. She gave us a reading that was letter perfect and then said, 'By the way, it doesn't say this on my resume but I did take The Kwan Do for four years, and I'm a brown belt. Is that





T: Nicholas Brendon as Xander, Anthony J. Head as Giles, Gellar as Buffy, Charlene Carpenter as Cordelia, R: Brian Thompson as Lyle

**"She's no Valley Girl. Buffy is an empowered young woman and there are no empowered young women on TV. That separates us from other high school shows."**

the week he was Oscar nominated for his *TOY STORY* screenplay. I thought, 'I'm going to have this role.' He tells me I nailed it, but I still went through eleven auditions."

The series' executive producers applied some key changes to the Buffy character. She's smarter than her big screen incarnation; she's also stronger and no longer the stereotypical Valley Girl. "When you do something week after week," said

done, and I think all kinds of young women will really relate to that."

"This is *very different* from the movie," Gellar concurred. "What we did was take the concept of the movie of this 16-year-old girl who is popular and has a perfect life, but there is something missing and she feels the kind of 16-year-old schling that everyone felt in their adolescence: *Am I an adult? Am I a child?* And, suddenly, she has to save the world. Now she is an outcast. She doesn't fit in. She doesn't know if she wants to be a cheerleader or fight vampires, and that is what makes her interesting and believable. Buffy is a person who is lost, who doesn't know where she belongs—and you feel for her."

A case study of teenage angst, translated into genre iconography, is visualized in one episode's nightmare sequences. Buffy dreams about her own conversion into vampirism. Another more poignant and personal nightmare, however, involves her divorced parents. "She is afraid that the reason her parents got divorced is because of her," explained Gellar, "and there is this awful scene where her father comes in and tells her, 'The reason I got divorced was because of you.' Can you imagine? I did the scene and cried and couldn't stop for 10 minutes. It's very upsetting."

Gellar can relate to every woman's "awkward phase" in junior high school. "That was my time to feel that I didn't know where I fit in. I tried to be jock. I tried to be cool. And I couldn't find my place. I think that is what Willow, Xander, and Buffy are all going through. That's

good?" No, perfect.

Gellar, a 2-year veteran of *ALL MY CHILDREN* (she played Susan Lucci's daughter) still found the auditioning routine to be grueling. Slim and compact, with sympathetic eyes and Auburn hair, she recalled the process with a voice that maintains perfect diction, even when speaking at ninety-miles-an-hour: "My manager spoke to the Warn-

er Bros. network and they mentioned they had this *BUFFY* show. He thought it would be a great opportunity to use my Tae Kwan Do, and to do comedy and drama. I probably had eleven auditions and four tests. It was the most awful experience of my life, but I was so driven. I had read the script and heard about Joss Whedon and how wonderful he was. I went in to audition

executive producer Gale Berman, 'you have to love this person and believe in them—certainly in a part even as unbelievable as this. The name 'Buffy' doesn't have the value it used to. We don't do the Valley Girl joke. This is an empowered young woman and there are no empowered young women on TV. That separates us from other high school shows. This girl gets the job





According Whedon, the balance of bloodsuckers and ballistics is problematic because "action and horror are actually more antithetical than comedy and horror. Horror is so much about not being in control of your environment and, in a way, comedy is the same thing—whereas Buffy, as an action heroine, takes control of her environment. So it's difficult to maintain that balance, but what is fun about the show is we don't know, from scene to scene, which way it's going to go. A scene that starts out very dramatic could end up very funny."

Each BUFFY episode requires an 8-day shooting schedule, the more generic locales include a high school in Torrance, California, and a cemetery in downtown Los Angeles. Most of the work, however, is officiated within an unpretentious Santa Monica warehouse filled to capacity with Steve Hardie's production designs. "Our sets are unbelievable," said Gellar. "In September, Joas and I went through the sets together for the first time and I cried because they are so beautiful. You get the feeling, 'This is real!'"

Gellar hopes high schoolers will relate to her heroine: "Buffy has an amazing spirit, and I hope that is never broken. She always finds something positive, there is always something good even with all the evil she is surrounded by. She's happy and she'll work through it. Although she has problems at times, she has this wonderful, unbridled spirit and I hope that never gets lost. I would just like to see her cope with life and the situation she has been dealt in the most positive way possible."

Back in 1992, the feature length film, directed by Fran Rubel Kuzui, debuted to a moderate boxoffice gross but turned into a sleeper at video counters. Making the transition to TV, the Warner Bros. network approved an initial commitment of 13 episodes. Ironically, five years ago,

Creator/executive producer Joss Whedon (l): "BUFFY (l) is not one of those Valley Girl shows that look down on characters. We deal with teen subjects."

what makes them such wonderful friends—they are helping each other get through this time."

It was during Gellar's "jock" tenure that she studied Tae Kwan Do. She was also a competitive figure skater for four years and has enrolled in kick boxing, street fighting and gymnastic training to prepare for the series' action sequences. Each episode typically includes a major fight scene, which may stretch into two

18-hours days of rehearsed choreography, and two or three minor fight sequences. "I've never done any street fighting before," explained Gellar. "Tae Kwan Do is really an art form. I never actually used it as combat. The very first time I had to break a broom over some guy's head, I was shaking and crying. I didn't want to do it. I had never hit anyone before. Now it's like, 'Yeah, give me the broom. Let me hit somebody!'"



Berman read the movie script and "thought it would make a great TV show. Then the movie came out; it was not a huge success, and the idea for a TV series went away. When the video came out and did really well, however, I called Fran [Kuzni] and we thought we would do a series for syndication, not thinking that Jess would have the time in his schedule. But we called his agent and asked Jess and he said, 'Yeah, this is what I really want to do.'"

Described by Whedon as a "high school horror show," the pilot depicts Buffy's enrollment in Sunnyvale High which is conveniently located on the cusp of Hell Mouth, a mystical portal to wherever it is that vampires, werewolves and other forces of darkness call home. Guided by "Watcher," Giles (Anthony Stewart Head), and aided by awkward buddy Xander (Nicholas Brendon) and shy computer hacker Willow (Alyson Hannigan), Buffy embarks on what's been short-handled as a "mix between BEVERLY HILLS 90210 and THE X-FILES."

Whedon wrote the feature-length BUFFY while functioning as story editor on ROSEANNE. Sitcoms are his family's legacy. Whedon's grandfather had written teleplays for the likes of MAYBE R.F.D. and THE DICK VAN DYKE SHOW, his father's track record includes ALICE and BENSON, among many others. The younger Whedon's skill with deft dialogue earned him an opportunity to rewrite SPEED and an Oscar nomination for TOY STORY, he recently polished ALIEN IV's screenplay.

But with big shots like Steven Spielberg and James Cameron angling for his work, why did Whedon opt for a sitcom? "It turns out that being a screenwriter in Hollywood is not all it's cracked up to be. People blow their noses on you. I can feel the difference. When I go to the set of ALIEN, people are very

**"This is totally different from the movie. Buffy, now an outcast, can't decide if she wants to be a cheerleader or save the world from vampires. She's lost."**



Sarah Michelle Gellar, as Buffy, in a face-off w/ vampirish Daria (Julie Benz). "My manager thought the show would be a great opportunity for my Tia Kwei Co."

much, but I'm standing in the corner watching them be very nice. When I'm making this show, I'm telling these stories. I've never had that feeling before. Not only am I telling them, but I'm telling one every eight days. I've been putting other things off, because this is the most unbelievable amount of work." Whedon, in fact, is directing the series' 13th episode. "Jess is always on the set," said Gellar. "He's there to get it right. It's his vision and we're his followers. He's the main focus that keeps us together."

Both Whedon and Berman feel it's critical to maintain likable, identifiable characters, though the series walks a narrow line between realism and fantasy, humor and campiness. "Think of it as childhood miseries or adolescent nightmares coming into reality," said Berman. "That

is the metaphor for the series. Every kid's difficulties are expressed. The episode about a praying mantis, camouflaged as beautiful substitute teacher, is about boys' virginity. This mantis only goes for virgins, so all these guys who have been running around the school putting their manhood out there are virgins. They are all after this beautiful teacher, who turns out to be this horrible bug. It's about entering manhood and what that is really about. It's fantastic to tell those stories in a different way."

"The horror and monster attacks have to come from the characters, from their relationships and fears," added Whedon. "It has to be the fact that they are funny, intelligent, normal people responding to the fact that this teacher is a praying mantis."

Whedon has also concep-

tualized "The Master," a vampiric supervillain who's sheltered in an ancient church, long ago swallowed by an earthquake, that's nestled beneath the high school. The demon plagues Buffy's dreams and dispatches belish emissaries to expedite his own escape.

"There is a suspension of disbelief that is necessary," continued Whedon. "Our characters understand that there is a Hell Mouth, and a vampire slayer, and these



thing really happen, but the rest of the school just sort of takes it for granted that this is a strange place to be. It's like people living in the world with Superman. They take it for granted."

Should BUFFY prove to be a hit for the Warner Brothers, it may anchor an additional evening of programming for the network in late 1997. Whedon would be perfectly content to "put off" feature assignments if he's afforded further exploration of the genre: "I think the best stuff happens when human relationships are twisted and extend into horror and not just having a monster show up. That's where the stuff is really scary, when it is somebody's parent or friend that is turning into a monster. It brings up issues that are very real."

"The thing that scares me most is people." □

# HAMMER HEROINES

BRIT BOMBSHELLS BANISHED TRADITIONAL "FANTASY FEMME" ROLES TO BLACK & WHITE U.S. OBSOLESCENCE.

By JESSIE LILLEY AND RONALD DALE GARNON

The image and function of women in the horror and science fiction genres has been, and to a degree still is, that of useless ornamentation. To put it bluntly, they have difficulty keeping their heads (or even feet) in any crunch situation. Women running from monsters inevitably trip over something—rocks, high heels, stray blades of grass—making it possible for the most uncoordinated



DRACULA HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE: the Count (Chris Lee) recruited female exhibitors. The U.S. tongue-in-cheek campaign (left) contributed to the film's success as the most profitable Dracula/monster film ever made.

of monsters to catch them. This sends the testosterone level in the male lead to something approximating critical mass, insuring a fight to the death against Evil, Perverted Science or simple Lechery on the part of the villain.

Sorry, boys, women don't always stumble. Nor do women spend their days lying

around on chaise lounges, as Zeta Johann did in *THE MUMMY* (1932) or as Helen Chandler did in *DRACULA* (1930)—the pair of them all sleep eyes and insipid languor. Though the film industry may well be the last sector of American society to admit it, women are not simply creatures that men must coddle and protect. They are capable

and intelligent human beings who can (and must) look after themselves. Admittedly, this simple idea has had a rough time of it, especially in the dream mills of Hollywood.

Throughout the '40s and '50s, the horror/SF film (rivaling the Western as the most retrograde of genres) remained mired in a comfortable and smug sexism, as a cursory viewing of nearly any B-level programmer of the post-war period would confirm. Home was still Mom and virtue wasn't simply a matter of anatomy but of ideology. Innovators like Roger Corman (17 *CONQUERED THE WORLD*, *WASP WOMAN*) chiselled away at the foundations, but it was left to a British studio to fell the puritanical walls within which America held its glamorous—but curiously passionless—femmes fatales.

The origins of Hammer studios are a familiar, oft-admired success story. In 1955, the studio presented a new science fiction film, *THE QUATERMASS EXPERIMENT* (U.S. title: *THE CREEPING UNKNOWN*). It proved so successful that, the





The Hammer product of Yvonne Renshaw: **CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF** (her cleavage was critical to the ad campaign) and **RIGHT CREATURES**. She freelanced in other genre films: **CIRCUS OF HORRORS**, **CORRIDORS OF BLOOD**, **DEVIL DOLL**.

# HAMMER HEROINES

## INGRID PITT

### SOLIQUIZING BARE BOOBS AND BLOOD.

BY JESSIE LILLEY

So you address Ingrid Pitt with inquiries—regarding the latitude of women's roles in Hammer films—and she abruptly shifts into Oscar Wilde doing stand-up: "It's an interesting basis for an argument that the 'Hammer glamour' was treated in any way special. From what I remember of it, a well-turned-out Hammer Babe wore a fey smile—soon to be turned into an expression of wide-eyed hysteria by a marauding Dracula—and a hairdo set in concrete, a set of canine teeth long enough to sever her own carotid without really trying, ...and a shift made of light tulle that revealed all when strategically placed in front of a studio light."

Though this sounds a bit like a dismissal, further probing reveals Pitt would like to thank her Hammer films—COUNTRESS DRACULA and THE VAMPIRE LOVERS—struck a blow for emancipated vampiredom; but, realistically I guess, I'm feeling myself. In the former film, it's that scab Spielsdorf (Peter Cushing) who knows everything, and gets his buns off lurking around tombs and decapitating anything that moves. And the bloody Count-

ess? She does it all for love of the gallant young Hussar Imre Toth (Sandor Elès), who is only after some decent stabling for his newly acquired horses and a chance at deflowering the pitiful Ilona (Leslie Anne Down)

So how would she gauge Hammer's more machismo element? "Whatever happens, it's the male characters who get the last mammal chuckle—invariably, it's the aesthetic Van Helsing over the aristocratic Dracula. That's not to say that between initially being stunned by Dracula's irresistible 'mittel' European after shave, and being symbolically raped by the giggling Dutch professor, the Hammer fodder doesn't get a fair crack of the racing thunder clouds.

"But, on closer inspection, it's all exploitation. Bare boobs, blood and brutality put bums on seats and that's what it's all about. I'm all for exploiting whatever you've got. Nobody was ever exploited who wasn't ready, willing and able."

Thus, in the province of Hammer, women appear to be victors in the battle between the sexes. Right? "The reason that the ladies who scream seem to do better in horror

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♦ Pitt as COUNTRESS DRACULA. "The authentic countess had this hang-up about bathing in the blood of virgins. Lucky she isn't alive today, she wouldn't bathe very often." ♦ Pitt's lovelorn liaison with Sandor Elès (S.G.) in THE VAMPIRE LOVERS.

VERONICA CARLSON

**"During my tenure at Hammer, all the men treated women like real people—not window dressing. I have been on films where I felt belittled. But Hammer was wonderful!"**

following year, they decided to try their hand at horror, a genre all-but-dead in the great American market but rich with possibilities. The result was **FRANKENSTEIN** (1957, U.S. title: **THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN**). Hammer and their suave and monstrous Baron (Peter Cushing) ushered in a new age of horror—one with brilliant color and greater expressiveness, artistry and social engagement than the Anglo-American horror film had known heretofore.

**DRACULA** (1958, U.S. title: **HORROR OF DRACULA**) is a prime example of Hammer's willingness to remake the genre. This renovation involved discarding a few Hollywood notions of male and female sexuality. Christopher Lee is undeniably their icon (and monster) of male sensuality. One can believe that this creature was once a powerfully passionate and romantic man. Though cursed centuries before, he has not forgotten the thrill of a beautiful woman's kiss.

This dark and entrancing sexiness is decisively learned with an animalistic will to dominate and control every last man and woman within reach. He was the studio's image of the seductive powers of evil and pleasure. Lee was a sympathetic and exciting vampire who could elicit the thrills and frissons of terror from both men and women in the audience.

Then there was Ingrid Pitt, a lovely and incisive actress long associated with the genre and often cited as another of Hammer's "window-dressing" female props. In **THE VAMPIRE LOVERS** (1970), she was the personification of a lover's dream. Tender, sensitive, solicitous, ravishingly beautiful with delicate features and an untamable cascade of brown hair, she manifested a feminine power and self-possession wholly the equal of any of Hammer's male villains. Servants, fathers, uncles, governesses, they all did her bidding, all the while think-



**T** Regret! Which initially resisted **ONE MILLION YEARS B.C.** ("I'm not making a damn dinosaur movie!"). **R** Victoria Vetri was hair to the hilt in **THE DINOSAURS RULED THE EARTH**. Francis Ford Coppola shot Vetri's last footage.

ing she knew what was best for their naive charges—and, all the while, she fed on the charming and unaffected childishness of those same innocents.

As in **COUNTRESS DRACULA** (1970), she kept her youth and fairness through killing and terror. She was like a perfect rose growing in the reeking muck of upper

class cruelty and selfishness.

Reports document Pitt's discomfort with the lesbian nature of the **VAMPIRE LOVERS** script. One would never know it from her performance, which indicates the level of commitment that Pitt, and the studio's players, routinely brought to their work.

The studio's output man-

aged to create a great deal of controversy among fans and critics. Traditionalists were dismayed by the revisionist liberties taken with the Universal iconography, some to the ludicrous point of condemning the use of color in horror films. Others were shocked at low-cut, diaphanous nightgowns and all the blood and general bawdiness. The traditionalists (in the manner of traditionalists everywhere) show a remarkable staying power.

Bryan Senn, venturing into gastronomy in an article for *Filmfax Magazine* (#53, Nov/Dec 1996), compares Hammer Studios to Yorkshire pudding, stating, "...so many of Hammer's films look weighty and de-



lectable on the outside, but sadly deflate into a formless mass when a fork breaks the crust to probe the interior." While leaving the reader to ponder the comic implications of that analogy, he goes on to observe, in discussion of Hammer's famous use of color, "...while the Hammer films nearly

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# HAMMER HEROINES

## CHRISTOPHER LEE

THE VETERAN ACTOR, HAMMER'S EMBODIMENT OF DRACULA, RECOUNTS HIS FAVORITE LEADING LADIES.

By Bill Kelley

Interviewed for the British trade periodical *The Daily Cinema* early in 1970, Hammer Films co-founder Sir James Carreras cavalierly remarked, "Let's face it—our Frankensteins and our Draculas are sold to the public and owe their popularity to the girls."

The actors, writers, directors and technicians who had contributed to Hammer's success did not feel Sir James' comment was worthy of rebuttal—with one exception: Christopher Lee, who had been assured by Carreras that Hammer would have to fold its tent—and put dozens of artisans out of work—unless he continued to play Count Dracula, hit the ceiling. Already smarting from the frustration caused by Dracula's dwindling on-screen presence in *DRACULA HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE* and *TASTE THE BLOOD OF DRACULA*—not to mention chafing under Hammer's reluctance to pay his full salary—Lee now had to read in the trades that his own employer thought his contribution was secondary.

In a letter to Gloria Lilibrige, published in the "Christopher Lee Club" bulletin, the actor responded (in part), "The girls, the beautiful girls... are usually actresses of dubious talent and ability."



Lee in *DRACULA A.D. 1873*. Co-star Stephanie Beacham, a fixture in genre movies, landed weekly roles in 3 prime time series: *DYNASTY*, *THE COLBYs*, *REAGAN'S DEN*.

If pressed on the point, only the most slavishly devout Hammer fan would disagree with Lee. Not for nothing did the careers of most Hammer ingenues fail to accelerate once they left the cozy Gothic confines of Bray Studios (Hammer's home base during its hammer years).

But there are exceptions, as I discovered during a casual conversation with Lee. He offhandedly referred to "that nice girl, Suzan Farmer," with whom he had co-starred in a trio of Hammer Films (*RASPUTIN*, *THE MAD MONK*, *DRACULA*, *PRINCE OF DARKNESS*) and a 1963 swash-buckler titled *DEVIL-SHIP PIRATES*.

I asked Lee if there were other Hammer starlets that he remembered with similar fondness: "Of course. Lack of

experience—the principal liability of most of the young Hammer actresses—does not necessarily mean lack of talent. It helps to have made a few films before you are moved up to a starring role, so you know what you are doing. But I've always contended that acting cannot be

taught. Technique can be taught, but you either are born with natural acting talent, or you are not. Suzan Farmer and I did three films together, and she gives three very different performances to match the three very different characters she was playing. Since the Hammer female roles often were inadequately written, that's no small accomplishment.

"My very favorite leading lady from those films has always been, and remains to this day, Barbara Shelley. She had considerable range, never gave less than a first-class performance, and was also charming and very beautiful. And we had a lot of laughs; she'd goose me under my cape in *DRACULA*, *PRINCE OF DARKNESS*, and I'd turn and say, 'You're a naughty girl.' But it was never at the expense of the

**DRACULA HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE:** Lee recalls that Verónica Cartón "possessed a combination of striking beauty and genuine intelligence."







TASTE THE BLOOD OF DRACULA. Lee was "struck" by the performance of Linda Hayden (P. 33), she subsequently appeared in the cult classic, *BLOOD ON SATAN'S CLAW*. r. Isla Blair, also in that film and very good, is still active.

work, I know that. When we made *THE GORGON*, which turns out to be Barbara's character at the end of the film, she was disappointed that she couldn't play the creature, herself. The film was shot very quickly, like all the Hammers, and there wasn't time to stop everything while Barbara was being made up, they got another actress, Prudence Hymen, to play the Gorgon. It would have been interesting to see what Barbara could have done with the character. But since the make-up is the weakest thing in the film—it's a pretty good movie, aside from that—maybe it's

just as well.

"Barbara had already made a few films in the late 1950s. Also, by the time I started working with her in 1963, she was prepared to bring something special of her own."

Cast in *DRACULA HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE* (1968), Lee was paired with Veronica Carlson, who—prior to her Hammer celebrity—played bit parts in only a couple of features, and was photographed as a "Page 3 girl" for a London tabloid.

"Well, she didn't have much experience, which you can't fault her for," Lee re-

## CHRISTOPHER LEE

**"Barbara Shelley never gave less than a first class performance; charming and very beautiful. We had a lot of laughs. She'd goose me under my cape in *DRACULA, PRINCE OF DARKNESS!*"**

called, "but she did possess a combination of striking beauty and genuine intelligence. In addition to being beautiful, she looked smart, which is an unbeatable match in a way. I remember her being eager to learn, asking a million questions. Veronica was also a talented artist—still is, I guess. She drew a sketch of me, while we were shooting the 'Drac-



ula' film. I haven't spoken to her, or heard from her, in many years; she lives in America now—in the Carolinas, I believe—with her husband and children."

Subsequently hired to reprise his role as the Count in a 1970 sequel, *TASTE THE BLOOD OF DRACULA*, Lee was impressed by two youthful actresses in the film's sprawling ensemble...

"I haven't seen the movie in years now, but I did look at it some years after we made it. I was struck by how good Linda Hayden is in the thing. She was a young woman—a teenager, really, if I'm not mistaken—with one prior film to her credit, and she had a very demanding role to play—the girl who becomes the instrument of Dracula's revenge. She was excellent."

"Isla Blair, who's also in that film, and very good, is still, I'm pleased to tell you, very active. I worked with her again, if only briefly, in

*TREASURE ISLAND* ('89), for TNT cable. She and her husband, Julian Glover, who's a very good actor, work quite a bit in British theater and television."

Lee was cast in *TO THE DEVIL... A DAUGHTER* ('76), a commercial disappointment that proved to be Hammer's final horror film. His leading lady was Nastassia Kinski, whose father Klaus played Renfield in *COUNT DRACULA* ('70), the Barcones-filmed misfire which—excepting his Hammer work—is Lee's only portrayal of Bram Stoker's vampire.

"I think she was 18, and very sweet," said Lee. "You'd never know she was Klaus Kinski's daughter, because he was quite mad. For years afterward, when I was living in the U.S. and Nastassia would be visiting Los Angeles, she'd call me. I would shout to my wife, 'It's that bad girl calling us again!' and Nastassia would giggle uncontrollably." □

TO THE DEVIL... A DAUGHTER. Lee & Nastassia Kinski; fond of her, hated the film's "ludicrous" conclusion.





Hired as a Welsh woman-  
to be in **CREATURES THE  
WORLD FORGET**—another  
of Hammer's proletarian  
platitudes—Julie Ege  
was stereotyped in fan-  
tasy fare, **MUTATIONS**,  
**LEONARD OF THE 7 GOLD-  
EN VAMPIRES**, **CRACK**,  
**FINAL PROGRAMME**, etc.

loapt from the screen in vi-  
brant hues, much was lost  
in terms of mood."

Presumably, we are to  
grant—without cavil—the  
dubious notion that no film  
made in color is capable of  
presenting a properly horri-  
fic (or, indeed, any sort of)  
mood. Yet, one of **HORROR  
OF DRACULA**'s most chill-  
ing scenes is when the

Count carefully studies the  
portrait of Jonathan Hark-  
er's darling Lucy "Charm-  
ing," he smiles as he returns  
the photo. Far from detract-  
ing, the subtly-muted colors  
in this scene only enhance  
the unnerving quality of  
Lee's declaration—the in-  
trusion of a controlled, but  
brute carnality into a stiff,  
pastel-dominated, mirror of

manners. The reader is in-  
vited to add her/his own fa-  
vorite uses of color, ad in-  
finitum, ad gloriam.

Traditionalists like Senn  
—whose book, *Golden Hor-  
rors*, is a delight and hence  
recommended—have the en-  
tirely laudable impulse to  
"rescue" black-and-white  
genre films from public in-  
difference and market obliv-

ion; but they don't seem to  
realize denunciation of any-  
thing new or innovative en-  
ly hurts their cause.

The other oft-repeated  
case against Hammer is  
more serious and, if accept-  
ed as proven, damning in-  
deed. Sue Svehla, in her es-  
say on the women of Ham-  
mer (*Bitches, Simbos, and*

continued on page 22



L. SHE w/ Ursula Andress and John Richardson  
opened a low-budget sequel **VENGEANCE OF SHE**.  
Richardson returned with newcomer Olivia Husli  
(p) as She, but the starlet's career quickly faded.



# HAMMER HEROINES VIDEO REVIVAL

## MERCHANDISING HORROR, FROM MUSIC CDS TO TRADING CARDS.

By BRUCE G.  
HALLENBECK

Hammer wrapped its final film, a fatigued remake of *THE LADY VANISHES*, back in 1979. But, almost 20 years later, cult laudation has prompted something that the company—even during its salad days—neglected to speculate on: making serious dividends from merchandising tie-ins. During the '60s, distributors literally gave everything away when you purchased a movie ticket, free beads tied-in with *RASPUTIN*, *THE MAD MONK*, free fangs tied-in with *DRACULA*, *PRINCE OF DARKNESS*, et al. Hammer was hardly a franchising maverick...I mean, we're not talkin' Goosebumps commerce, here.

The latest development: a total of 14 Hammer-Seven Arts titles, which were originally released from the mid to late-'60s, will debut on Elite laserdiscs. They'll also find a home on cassettes, courtesy of Anchor Bay Home Video, a California-based company managed by filmmaker William Lustig. So who had claimed video ownership of *THE LOST CONTINENT* (1968) and other films subsidized by the Hammer-Seven Arts coalition?



*DEVIL RIDES OUT*, a CD produced by Steve America, offers James Bernard's Hammer compositions, e.g. *KISS OF THE VAMPIRE*.

tion? "Nobody owned them," replies Lustig. "When the films were made, no one foresaw the emergence of home video as an ancillary market. So, although the films have been shown on television many times, they've never been released to home video until now."

The even better news: When Lustig picked up the rights from Hammer president Roy Skaggs, he also acquired the original negatives. "The movies will be released on disc and tape in their original aspect ratio—letterboxed."

And which movies are we talking about? Hold onto your hats, Hammer fans—it's the motherlode. The initial quartet of video titles, which theatrically premiered in '65-'66, will be re-



Anchor Bay Home Video is not only releasing the films of founder Hammer (Frankenstein, Dracula), but also the company's sometimes-superior "bottom of the double bill" fare, including 1966's *THE REPTILE* (top, with Jacqueline Pearce and Jennifer Davis) and *PLAGUE OF THE ZOMBIES*.

leased in July: *DRACULA*, *PRINCE OF DARKNESS*, *THE REPTILE*, *RASPUTIN THE MAD MONK*, and *PLAGUE OF THE ZOMBIES*. Four more titles, scheduled for a Halloween '97 release, are likely to include a 1967 double-bill, *THE MUMMY'S SHROUD* and *FRANKENSTEIN CREATED WOMAN*.

Hammer's lush orchestrations have been preserved on CD, thanks to Salva Screen America, a company that excels in refining and compiling film soundtracks. Sample the distinctive Hammer scores, which resonate with Grand Guignol, including *Dracula: Classic Scores from Hammer Horror*, *The Devil Rides Out: Music for Hammer Horror, Romance and Adventure* and *Vampire Circus*.

Company executive Ford A. Faxton admits he "was weaned on Hammer, and I still have a taste for busty brunettes. Hammer is for people who think that 38DD is just about right. My favorite Hammer heroine is Dana Gillespie (*FF 58*), the incredible-looking woman in *THE LOST CONTINENT*."

For further info related to the Hammer CDs, write Salva Screen Records America,

Inc., 1600 Broadway, Suite 910, New York, NY 10019.

Meantime, check out the Hammer series of 81 full-color trading cards. Images include not only scenes from movies (*BRIDES OF DRACULA*, *CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF*, *CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN*, *TWINS OF EVIL*) but reproductions of movie posters. Better put the pedal to the metal, these babes have been selling like hotcakes. Write to: Cornerstone Communications, Inc., P.O. Box 18306, Tucson, AZ 85731.

Baltimore's FANEX conventions have been about as exciting as a LOVE BOAT reunion, but "new blood" is invigorating the old mule. Subtitled *Hammer Has Risen From The Grave II*, the '97 installment is inundated with Hammer veterans, some of whom were profiled within this Hammer homage issue: Veronica Carlson, Hazel Court, Caroline Munro, Virginia Wetherell (*FF 3-4*), director Freddie Francis, screenwriter Jimmy Sangster and more. "The public more often gravitates to female guests," explains chairperson Jim Custerhaugh, "Younger, physically attractive actresses are a prime demographic

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# HAMMER HEROINES HAZEL COURT

HER SENSUOUS PRESENCE STOKED THE  
HORROR CINEMA'S SEXUAL RENAISSANCE.

BY BRUCE G.  
HALLENBECK

It wasn't until I sailed through my post-adolescence that it finally occurred to me; Roger Corman cast Hazel Court as tarty, tempestuous shrews with a flair for extra-marital indulgences; check-out *PREMATURE BURIAL*, *MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH* and *THE RAVEN*. Hammer Films courted the actress for sultry "nice girl" roles.



THE MAN WHO COULD CHEAT DEATH (1958) Court's nude poses for sculptor Anton Diffring are visible only in the European release.

The  
Man  
Who  
Could  
Cheat  
Death



But I really didn't notice the polarity between her U.S. and British characterizations, back then, I was too busy staring at her cleavage.

That's right. I was nine-year-old lad when she came into my life via a photo published in *Fantastic Monsters of the Films*; seated on Boris Karloff's lap, Court was clad in a gown so low-cut that you could pretty much see her (select your choice of a juvenile euphemism for "breasts", twin peaks, double helixes, titty-fruttis, kunguns, henny hills, et al.). Marked me for life, ever since then, I've been addicted only to beamy redheads.

Couple of weeks ago, thirtysome

years later after I was introduced to her picture, I met the femme fatale in the flesh. Still beautiful, elegant, voluptuous. For openers, I ask her to validate that she made her film debut in 1946...

"That's about right," replied Hazel Court. "I went to London, I remember, to Ealing Studios, when the bombs were still dropping. My mother took me there and we were in an air raid." Court was cast in *CHAMPAGNE CHARLIE*, but afforded only one line of dialogue: "I had to giggle and say, *The never drank champagne before!*" She was saddled with only a single line for her subsequent film, *GALETTY* ("I do embroidery, sir!").

Court's initial genre film was *GHOST SHIP* (1953), which she made with her then-husband, actor Dermot Walsh. It was burdened with kind of a low budget film—

"Very low budget," she contradicted. "We shot it all on [director] Vernon Sewell's yacht. It was over in a flash. I

think the film probably looks it."

Two years later, she co-starred with another Brit bombshell, Adrienne Corri (*CLOCKWORK ORANGE*, *VAMPIRE CIRCUS*, et al.), in *DEVIL GIRL FROM MARS*. Sort of a distaff twist on *DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL*, this cultish clunker involves an extraterrestrial vixen, bent on world supremacy, who's abetted by a 10-ft. Bio lighter (i.e. robot). "You know, I'm told that *DEVIL GIRL* is playing somewhere in the world every day," smiled Court. "I think that's wonderful! Spielberg looked at it, as one of the first, before he made anything, to do

with outer space! The movie was made for nothing—practically!—and it's a part of film history, now. I think it's wonderful to be a part of it."

Hammer's *CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1957) was the catalyst that fueled genre renaissance; the first Frankenstein film shot in color, its decolletage and clinical violence provoked a notoriety that concluded the horror cinema's Age of Innocence. "The film's director, the late Terence Fisher, was very shy, but he was very methodical about his directing," recalled Court, "—and very technical. He got everything done and it was always a joy. We all had wonderful fun. We made the Hammer films very quickly. They were beautifully mounted, with wonderful sets. Some of those costumes were real Victorian clothes.

"We worked like a family at Hammer. It was very rare that anyone would be late but if someone was, nobody screamed or yelled. If we didn't start until eleven in the morning,



CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN: "Among the film's complexities," noted a writer, "is Frankenstein's lack of sexual interest in the very voluptuous Hazel Court."

somewhat we always made it up."

Christopher Lee, hurried under latex and greenspant as the Frankenstein monster, wasn't the most popular guy on the lot. "People tried to avoid him when he had that makeup on," recounted Court. "You couldn't talk to him when he was wearing it, because he couldn't answer you. But he's a very funny man, always telling tales. He had an enormous number of stories to tell."

Court was subsequently cast in *THE MAN WHO*

**COULD CHEAT DEATH**, all about a dapper sculptor who appears to be 35 years old—though he's actually 100something, retaining his youth by parasitically surviving on glands from involuntarily donors. According to rumor, Court goosed the overseas bonafide by haring her breasts, of course, she promptly assures me that, "Yes, I did a nude scene—well, just my top part for the European version. I was being sculpted by Anton Diffring, who played an artist—the title role, in fact.

#### HAZEL COURT

**"The *Time* magazine review stated, 'The sexy, lusty redhead is played by Miss Hazel Court, in whose cleavage you can sink the entire works of Poe plus a bottle of his favorite booze.'"**

It was one of the first scenes of its kind to be shot in England. They cleared the set and had just a skeleton crew. Well, the movie warranted my nudity. The character did have to be sculpted, that was part of it. If it hadn't been warranted, I would have objected... but it was beautifully done. It was a shot that no one could object to. There I am, front and back!"

Matter of fact, Court's physical endowments competed with Frankenstein and Dracula as the #1 genre icon. "Time magazine did a review of *THE RAVEN*," she grinned. "Their critic wrote, 'The sexy, lusty redhead is played by the English actress Miss Hazel Court, in whose cleavage you can sink the entire works of Edgar Allan Poe plus a bottle of his favorite booze.' Was Court embarrassed by these allusions to her chest? 'No—it went with the territory.'"

Hammer's detractors have asserted the company's "dress code"—plunging necklines and diaphanous nightgowns—were tailored solely to exploit women. Court dismisses the criti-

cism: "First of all, the times were different. There was a big surge of femininity then, after the war, and I think we still remained very feminine. The wonderful clothes and the way we all portrayed the parts, we always acted them for real, I think largely it's [Hammer screenwriter/producer] Jimmy Carreras, [Hammer managing director] Michael Carreras and Roger Corman who really went with the beauty. Even when I'm stashing myself to death [laughs], I'm clad in the most gorgeous gown with an antique headdress—just to put it on was magnificent, you know? They never let the femininity get away."

Hazel Court appears to be quite content with Hammer, horror and related women's roles, thank you very much. Then again, she just may have a beef with the U.S. Postal Service. "You know, they've got stamps coming out the great horror actors, like Karloff and Lugosi among others—I think ten. So I'm just wondering now, are the actresses going to be served as well?" □

Jack Nicholson, Olive Sturgess and Hazel Court in *THE RAVEN*. "Jack was always talking about this great writing talent he thought he had," recalls Court.



*Virgins*, Midnight Marquee Press 1996), opens with this bon mot: "Hammer Studios loved women...they loved to victimize them, rape them, undress them, exploit them, and basically use them as plot-furthering devices or attractive set decorations." This is very harsh, even inflammatory—particularly if one remembers that she is talking about a series of fictional narratives, and not about anything subject to formal criminal indictment.

Fortunately for admirers of these films, Svehla's standard of proof is thin. The essay is a farrago of unsupported assertions, misplaced anger, and a rhetorical style reminiscent of Rush Limbaugh at his worst; all of this is heated to the boiling point by a narrow and unworkable conception of feminism, and a broad, puritan distrust of sexuality.

That Hammer victimized, raped, and exploited women is adduced by an offhand remark from Michael Carreras. The Hammer producer was quoted by Richard Klemensen on the subject of Jeanne Roland's performance in *CURSE OF THE MUMMYS TOMB* (1965): "I thought she was quite pretty. She had never acted in her life. I used her as an ornamental piece...That is all she was meant to be, more or less."

We freely admit that Hammer used pretty women (and pretty men) for their physical charms. Carreras' quote is proof of nothing, save that he is considerably more honest than the two generations of American producers who preceded him in the genre.

Attempting to bolster her argument, Ms. Svehla gauges Katy Wild in *THE EVIL OF FRANKENSTEIN* as "...possibly one of the worst woman's roles in the entire Hammer catalog. She portrays a beggar who cannot speak...Her main duty seems to be leading the Baron and his new assistant around, a device used to forward what little plot there is."

One of the most difficult

BARBARA SHELLEY

**"Hammer producers were very pro-women as an integral part of the film. A lot of the other films I did required me to stand still and look good. But Hammer gave us something to do."**



**DRACULA, PRINCE OF DARKNESS** Barbara Shelley's conservative housewife turns into a literal vamp (6). Her Victorian demeanor is restored after death (7)



roles for an actor to play is a character who communicates sans dialogue. To do it well, the actor must be quite proficient at his/her craft. Ms. Wild proves herself to be no amateur and it is revealingly silly of Ms. Svehla to ally power of speech with strength of character. Moreover, the essential wrong-headedness of this line of reasoning becomes apparent when one remembers Richard Wordsworth in *THE CREEPING UNKNOWN*. His doomed astronaut was given a similar affliction, and no one would suggest that Nigel Kneale's scenario was morally or artistically derelict in so doing. Nor did his regrettable inability to utter ringing denunciations, of the society that sacrificed him for the sake of the Cold War, hinder his ability to convey much the same sentiment without saying a word.

A similar dispute is put forth regarding Ursula Andress' Ayesha from the film, *SHE* (1965). Svehla desperately tries to validate her supposition by noting that Andress "experiences the worst fate Hammer could envision for a woman—aging." But does she blame writer H. Rider Haggard, whose book was adapted into the film? Nope, Svehla rails against the studio!

This critique is not only incredibly unperceptive but sexist; it's a blanket summation that Hammer considers women to be more vulnerable to fear, regarding age and a resultant physical degeneration, than men! In *THE HORROR OF DRACULA*, Christopher Lee is reduced to ash—losing beauty and undead life in an aging process quite as rapid and ugly as that of Ms. Andress' David Peel's demise in *BRIDES OF DRACULA* is nearly as gruesome an example of a corrupt, life-destroying beauty's liquidation.

So are we to assume that these performances are unimportant and lacking in artistic validity because the characters are male? While arguments such as these

might be valid when taken alone and out-of-context, they lose power when considered within the whole corpus of Hammer's thematic preoccupations. While their critics may discriminate, Hammer Studios did not—they're the proof of the (Yorkshire?) pudding, as it were.

Veronica Carlson, as Anna in **FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED**, is a far cry from the U.S. horror heroines. She is a staunch ally to her weak-kneed fiancé, even in times of great emotional and physical stress. While she questions some of his methods in raising necessary cash, she nonetheless stands by him when it's obvious that nothing else is to be done. They plan their future together as partners, as opposed to his telling her what his dream of a future is.

Hammer studios treated its women with respect: though Carlson's Anna was raped by the Baron in this film, its script reviled him for doing so. And while Susan Svehla claims "the scene was not necessary and made little sense," we

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**PREHISTORIC WOMEN's** Edie Barry (7) & Julie Eps in **CREATURES WORLD FORGOT** Crying fit, these cavebebe babes cruised on tans.



# HAMMER HEROINES

## CAROLINE MUNRO

HER LIAISON WITH HAMMER VAMPIRES  
KINDLED A CAREER AS A FEMME FATALE.

BY TED NEWSOM

She's among the last of the British beauties to enliven Hammer's latter-day films. Caroline Munro's voluptuous physique and long, dark hair had sparked a career in photo modeling, which directly resulted in her Hammer connection.

I was introduced to the actress while shooting a video documentary, *FLESH AND BLOOD, THE HAMMER HERITAGE OF HORROR*. Still ravishing and looking not a year older than she did in her '72 releases (*CAPTAIN KRONOS-VAMPIRE HUNTER* and *DRACULA A.D. 1972*), Munro reflected on her career: "Here's the story I've heard. I'd been doing a poster for an English campaign called Lamb's Navy Rum. [Hammer founder] Sir James Carreras used to live down in Brighton, and apparently he used to see this big poster every day, and he supposedly said, 'Find that girl and bring her in!'"

"Anyway, they found me and I went in and had a chat with him, and I was put under contract for a year, which was wonderful."

Her official duties were decorative: posing for photos, appearing at premieres of Hammer productions and so on.

"I honestly hadn't seen that many of the Hammer movies, but what I'd seen I'd enjoyed. The escapism and the romance—elements sadly missing in films today."

When Warners suggested updating the *Dracula* cycle along the lines of AIP's successful *COUNT YORGA, VAMPIRE*, Munro landed her initial on-screen job for Hammer: "Ooh, it



Christopher Lee and Munro in *DRACULA A.D. 1972*: "It was messy for me, definitely. But it was the first time that I realized I wanted to act."

was good. *DRACULA A.D. 1972*, which we shot in '71, transplanted the vampire to a modish 20th-century setting. And I was working with a really good group of actors. Stephanie Beacham, Marsha Hunt—some actors who had done a lot of Shakespeare—and, of course, Chris Lee and Peter Cushing. So we actually had a really good time making it. We did a bit on location, and a lot in the studio.

As the sacrificial victim exploited to

revive the long-dead Count, Munro was splashed with blood in a deserted church as a disciple (Christopher Neame) invoked the titular King of the Undead: "I ended up in a very messy state, but it was also slightly frightening. They built this wonderful church inside the studio. All the doors were closed and you had big, black curtains at the top.

"Neame recited a Satanic ritual that I believe is actually chanted in various ceremonies. And I'm sure of this and I know all the crew saw it, too; the curtains started to move. They really did start to move. No explanation. No doors were open. Nobody knows to this day why that happened. It was pretty—[simultaneously shudders and giggles]—when, pretty good. So we were all in the mood of the film."

Munro is served-up as the resurrected Count's first meal: "That was pretty impressive to me. For one thing, seeing Chris Lee dressed as Dracula is quite awe-inspiring. You don't have to act much, because he is very frightening when he has all his gear on—his white face and the contact lenses. And he's very tall, so he looks wonderful. That was the first time, in my

then-short career, that I realized I wanted to act because I believed in what I was doing; at that moment, I was being bitten by Dracula and I believed it. Hopefully, the audience did."

After the fang job, Munro's drained corpse is dumped in a vacant lot: "Very undignified [chuckles]. It was most unerving. Actually, it was outside in a building site. They got me ready, got all the scars and the makeup on, then buried me up to my neck. It was get-





By the early '70s, Hammer's product had drained; Munro's ties with fantasy pic were sustained with the likes of *AT THE EARTH'S CORE* (5) and *BLAZZARD*.

ting on for lunch time, so they said, 'Right, we'll come and shoot the scene after lunch.' It started to rain, so they stuck a tarpaulin [a plastic sheet] over my head. And that was that, they went off and had a tea break or lunch [laughs]."

**CAPTAIN KRONOS-VAMPIRE HUNTER** not only afforded Munro more screen visibility, but a substantial role as Carla: "Oh, happy memories. Brian Clemens directed that film, and Horst Janson was cast in the title role. Very, very en-

joyable. That's one of my personal favorites because it was a part that, I think, came closest to me. Me, myself, I'm not that way in nature, but I enjoyed it with her. I thought, 'Oh, yes, she is a bit feisty.'

"I played a very willful gypsy girl, getting pilloried in my first scene. Eggs and tomatoes! What they did was stick my hands and neck through a wooden pillory. They said, 'We want it really realistic,' and I said, 'Okay.' I wasn't quite sure. And the extras tossed eggs

## CAROLINE MUNRO

**"[I] got more to do than look pretty in *CAPTAIN KRONOS*. Its only violence scene is a tiny drop of blood on a white glove. It's a stylish romp. That's what Hammer was all about."**

and tomatoes in my face; you name it, they just chucked it. The crew did it too, and they really enjoyed it. However, the eggs were terrific for the hair, a wonderful conditioner."

A scripted nude scene prompted Munro to negotiate a sort of surrogate divestment: "I didn't want to do it. We discussed it beforehand, because I didn't feel it was really necessary. But they wanted it to appear nude, so we came to a compromise. My hair was a lot longer in those days—the locks covered my upper chest—I actually used some sort of gaffer's tape to stick it down, so I felt quite secure in that sense. And then I donned a pair of flesh-color knickers and I was all right, it was like being on the beach, really."

"Oh, I suppose that was the way films were going in general, so—[shrugs]. I sort of came in at the end of it. I always feel my time would have been more in the '50s, when it was more in the imagination than like now. These days, you can see everything—sadly, nothing is left to the imagination."

**KRONOS'** hybridization of genres—swashbuckler, horror, serial melodrama, satire—later earned critical acclaim but was a commercial bust. "Possibly, it was too romantic," Munro muses. "It was either ahead of its time or the other way, maybe lost in time. I'm not too sure. The timing was wrong, anyway."

Hammer and **KRONOS'** producers—Brian Clemens and Albert Fennell, collaborators on **THE AVENGERS** television series—pitched another co-production to Munro. "There was some talk about me playing Sister

Hyde in **DOCTOR JEKYLL AND SISTER HYDE**. But a very fine actress, Martine Beswick, went on to play it. There was quite a bit of nudity, and I wasn't keen on that. But, by the time the film debuted on the screen, there wasn't much nudity at all. I think a lot of it had been cut."

Hammer's merger, post-'72 slate forced Munro to find employment elsewhere, including **THE GOLDEN VOYAGE OF SINBAD** and **THE SPY WHO LOVED ME**. She abridges her description of the latter film, a 007 saga, to "huge budget, very glamorous locations. We were on the Costa Esmeralda in Sardinia. You just had to glance out of your window to see speedboats of every size and color. Roger Moore is a wonderful man, great sense of humor."

Trekking to New York, Munro added a touch of class to Bill Lustig's lurid

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Munro's poses for Lamb's *Heavy Rum* landed her a contract with Hammer





Kate O'Mara (*VAMPIRE LOVERS*, *HORROR OF FRANKENSTEIN*) crossed over to U.S. prime time (*DYNASTY*) and wrote *Gone With the Wind* and *A Woman's Survival Kit*.

advance the theory that the scene serves to prove Baron Frankenstein's complete disregard for human beings—living or dead—in his never-ending quest for the continuance of life and the gratification of his own ego. The Baron raped Anna because he thought doing so would complete his domination of her; he would've doubtless raped her fiancée, Karl, if he thought it necessary to instill the appropriate submission.

This scene, so completely bereft of any of the usual Hammer eroticism, helps drive home the reality of the fanatic in all his gruesome righteousness. The front office may have demanded "more sex" in this picture,

but Terence Fisher's firm grasp on theme and character insured the scene illuminated the cold-eyed ruthlessness of Baron Frankenstein. One should also note that at least Hammer's heroines had the good sense not to fall in love with their rapists, as was done in such bestselling American moonlight fables like *Gone With the Wind* and *The Fountainhead*.

Rape, in this film, is a criminal act committed by a man entirely devoid of human decency. Hammer Studios, when at their best and whether they meant to or not, didn't just make righteousness; they taught lessons in humanity as well.

In the Gothic films,

## HAZEL COURT

**"Window dressing? Not true! We held on to our dignity and rights in the Hammer films. We weren't just ornamental. We were used by monsters, but that's not just being an ornament."**

Hammer dressed their women in low-cut, revealing and flowing garments. For all their innovation, Hammer still must endure accusations of "exploitation" and "window dressing" from the mouths of many feminists. But what is exploitation? A woman baring her breast is not exploitative, nor is the revealing of a man's hairy chest. Hammer did both, in nearly equal measure. For every "decorative" busty actress with thick hair and ample décolletage, there was always another male beauty with a Byronic profile and an athletic physique. Witness Jim Finch in *THE VAMPIRE LOVERS*. What was he other than another decorative protagonist? John Moulder-Brown in *VAMPIRE CIRCUS*, though his character had more to do, was obviously chosen for his looks.

In an interview with Jim Knash in *Scarlet Street* #7, Moulder-Brown himself states, "He [Robert Young] cast *VAMPIRE CIRCUS* in an offbeat way. I wasn't really old enough to play the part, but that was his choice." Moulder-Brown fur-

ther states, "The young heroes were always rather wet, drippy, English types. You know—round-faced, boyish yet manly..."

This is only as it should be, given Hammer's lush romanticism and emphasis on the tangible, material reality of evil, reason, and innocence. Moreover, the human body is beautiful and not something to be hidden away under lace and whalebone or leather and silk. It is neither ugly nor sinful nor always "exploitative" (whatever that overworked term means). And sex, for most of us, is nothing more than an expression of joy and appreciation and simple human desire. Hammer's emphasis on sexuality was essential to the maturing of the genre.

It was, frankly, revolutionary and that is why it's output annoys those of a conservative, agenda-bearing temperament. Even today.

We suggest that sexist stereotypes were rife in earlier films of the genre. With rare exceptions, women were, as previously stated, nothing more than pretty trinkets to be cared for and

Fisher's Mary and Madeline Collins as *TWINS OF EVIL*. Produced as *VIRGIN VAMPIRES*, the film was released in Australia as *TWINS OF DRACULA*.



displayed. These beauties often did nothing more than lie inert until it was time to face the muse of the monster. Hammer's women were something altogether different and resist the simplistic categories—the harlot, the hedonist, the heroine and, that tritest of sexist stereotypes, the “good girl”—which Ms. Svehla attempts to impose upon them. The difference is deci-



Yvette Steingard in *LUST FOR A VAMPIRE*, Part 2 of Hammer's Karnstein trilogy, occasionally losing her diaphanous gown (1), the bisexual vamp seduces Ralph Bates (2), who replaced Peter Cushing, and Michael Johnson (3)

sive. Admittedly, the cooing for both the men and women was flattering in the extreme; but, even today, the Victorian frocks provoke “righteous” indignation.

Hammer's only prerequisite for their lead performers, other than physical beauty, was an aptitude for acting. The talent delivered laudable performances, and the screenwriters gave them a good deal of interesting material with which to work.

Barbara Shelley, as Professor Quatermass's assistant in *FIVE MILLION YEARS TO EARTH* (1967, British title: *QUATERMASS AND THE PIT*), is only one example of Hammer's vision of womanhood. Not only does Shelley's character accept the script's marriage of the occult and extraterrestrials, she provides the research necessary to helping uncover the mystery of Hobb's End.

Maureen Connell in *THE ABOMINABLE SNOWMAN OF THE HIMALAYAS* (1967) offers further insight into Hammer's matriarchy. Here was a lovely-looking woman who was married to our

hero, Peter Cushing, she was his assistant in work, his companion in times of relaxation. Contrary to the standard horror/science fiction plot, it was Cushing's character who got into trouble and his wife who organized and led the search party that finally rescued her spouse.

Martina Hunt's Baroness in *BRIDES OF DRACULA*, far from being a strong female character (as Ms. Svehla would have us believe), is a pathetic and

beaten old woman who scarcely merits the liberty wrought by Van Helsing. While it's a powerful role handled by an actress who's equal to it, the character is not one to be admired. Her poise and ease of manner is counterfess from the first scene. She is brittle, affected and has spent her life spoiling her young son and indulging in all the joys of the aristocracy. When it caught up with her one day, she hid the evidence and lied. She spent the rest of

her days a prisoner incarcerated within her own stately home, a faithful servant, Greta, and demonic son are enmeshed within her solitude.

Yvonne Monlaur's Marianne, though guided by a misplaced compassion, was exceptionally powerful. Defying her hostess, she risks the wrath of the Baroness to help what she perceives to be a creature in pain. The truth of her error is forced home for her by the untimely

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Christopher Lee considers his spin as *RASPUTIN, THE MAD MONK* to be “one of the best performances I’ve given.” The film recycled sets from *DRACULA*, *PRINCE OF DARKNESS* and even engaged the latter film's heroine, Barbara Shelley



# HAMMER HEROINES

## BARBARA SHELLEY

CAST IN PIX THAT FUELED CIVIC OUTRAGE,  
SHE YEARNs FOR THOSE GOOD OL' DAYS.

By JESSIE LILLEY

A most charming and eloquent performer, Barbara Shelley graciously took the time to do a little reminiscing about her time at Hammer Studios, and put in a few perceptive words on the



THE GORGON Paired with Peter Cushing, whom Shelley christened "Prop Master." L. Rubber waxes were woven into the hair of Prudence Hymen, who played Shelley's gorgon/killer ego. Shelley volunteered to wear real snakes!

ED (1944). It's more scary than any other film."

But Shelley has another scary movie on her list. "There was a film made in England, years and years ago. They changed the title, but it was originally called THE NIGHT HAS EYES (TERROR HOUSE, 1942). And it had a wonderful cast, James Mason, Mary Clare—Joyce Howard was the female lead—and it was simply to do with a house in the middle of the moor, and there was a load of murders going on. It turned out that Mary Clare and Wilfrid Lawson were both mad people in the end. But what made it frightening was there were marshes and bogs around, so people kept falling into the mud and getting killed. That was a terrifying film. Mind

you, I saw it yonks and yonks ago, so I've forgotten...but I do remember it being quite frightening. The old version of GREAT EXPECTATIONS contained one of the most frightening scenes in movies, with the sudden jumping out from behind the tombstone. It had no blood and no guts and no chainsaws. Horror works effectively, not unlike love scenes, on what you don't see. It's your imagination that does the work for you. And they've forgotten that."

Hammer Studios is well-known for introducing more sexuality and more violence to the horror film than past generations. And Ms. Shelley acted in a few of those films. Does she think that Hammer films, released during the '60s, exceeded an

acceptable limit? "Oh, no! I remember doing a scene in THE GORGON with darling Peter [Cushing] and he was doing an autopsy on the only other woman in the cast, who was a mad woman. And so he was looking into her head to see if there were snakes or something in there. I remember seeing it in the cinema and people were going, 'Oh my God!' They were actually seeing nothing! They were hearing Peter cutting a cabbage. I mean, I could barely keep my face straight while we were doing it, because Peter—I used to call him 'The Prop Master.' God rest him—was doing it with such precision. He was wielding that kitchen knife like a scalpel. And it was making the most awful noise.

"Other than that, people say to me nowadays, 'You know, Hammer was considered pretty gory.' I say, 'Yes, but you never saw much.' You saw some blood dripping down. You didn't see an open wound and you didn't see the knife cutting into flesh that made the wound. You heard a noise or somebody screamed or there was a slashing gesture, and then there was an infinitesimal pause and then—drip, drip, drip. And that is frightening. It is a natural sound which, in fact, is not natural. And I think this is what is frightening. Like in THE BAD SEED, the beautiful child who is homicidal. I said this to [producer] Tony



DRACULA, PRINCE OF DARKNESS: Shelley is stalked by Andrew Kier. Writers acknowledge that vampirism liberated Shelley's sexually repressed character

Keys in regard to THE GORGON: 'Don't use rubber special effects. Photograph something real. Do trick photography, with something real.' I mean [Ray] Harryhausen is marvelous. I love the figures that he makes when he does the mythical beasts. I think that he's brilliant because it has a style of its own and because they are not natural objects—but they move in a specific way. They are kind of stylized, which I find terribly chic—not frightening, but beautiful. But if you take a Venus fly trap and use it as a triffid and photograph it up close, it's alive and it's moving—and it's

terrifying.

"Since I played the title character, I offered to have snakes in a headress on my head, I'm not frightened of snakes. After it was all over, Tony Keys agreed with me, but it was too late then. He would have had the horror film of all time. THE GORGON was an excellent film, beautifully shot by Michael Reed, who was absolutely brilliant as a period photographer. But you see, they should have used real effects. And I told them that right from the beginning. They stomped into my caravan on the next film and said, 'I saw the first out of THE GORGON last night.'

Shelley in Hammer's understated \$5 MILLION YEARS TO EARTH. A critic wrote, "...she was this out the important role as an intelligent, non-sensational heroine."



## BARBARA SHELLEY

**"They've gone too far with the blood lust. Horror works effectively, not unlike love scenes, on what you *don't* see. There's nothing more scary than the old U.S. film, THE UNINVITED."**

And I said, 'How was it?' His eyebrows were white and very bushy, and they shot up and down on his face and he said, 'You were right.' And he turned around and stomped out. It's just a shame. I think THE GORGON stands up awfully well. And I do think if we'd used real snakes, it would have been—quite possibly—the horror film of all time."

The cinema is cluttered with a surfeit of vampires, and one can't resist the temptation to ask which among them was most effective—exempting Christopher Lee, of course. "I like NOSFERATU, the old German one. I think that's frightening. That is scary because there's no sound—it was a silent film—and there's these enormous long nails, and we all know that the nails go on growing in the grave. I'm sure the Nosferatu character inspired the makeup for Lon Chaney, Sr.'s Phantom of the Opera, with the black eyes and white, pasty complexion. Those old horror films are frightening."

Has the actress ever been unnerved by any of her own genre-related films? "The only time when dear old Terry [i.e. director Terence Fisher] got me going was on the set of DRACULA, PRINCE OF DARKNESS. I used to say, 'Terry, it's no good, you can't scare me.' By the time I turned 11, I was the height I am now—which is 5'8"—and could get into any horror movie I was always fascinated by the makeup in FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLFMAN and things like that—I was always looking at special effects. So I said to him, 'You can't scare me, Terry. It's no good, no matter what you do.' And I

walk on the set and they had just strung-up the double for actor Charles Tingwell. He was suspended, upside down, over Dracula's tomb; they had cut his throat and the blood was dripping down. There was some problem with the lighting on the set, and it was terribly quiet which wasn't the usual thing on a Hammer film—there was routinely a kind of a buzz going on, but it was absolutely quiet on the set. And, in the midst of this silence, there was this drip—drip—drip—of the blood going down. Suddenly, I got a frisson right up the back of my spine [laughs]. And I looked at Terry and I said, 'You've done it! You have frightened me!' He wouldn't believe it, he got hysterical. He couldn't stop laughing."

Something that can't be put into words—rather like the wonderful way one feels when speaking with Barbara Shelley. □

Barbara Shelley in Hammer's RASPUTIN, THE MAD MONK (1966)



ly death, and unerring resurrection, of her fellow teacher. Error or not, her convictions are infinitely more assertive than the Baroness' personal credence.

Freda Jackson as Greta has the strongest role in the film save that of Van Helsing. She is the loyal family retainer who has cared for the Baroness and her son 20 years. Now the Baroness is dead and the young man is free, but Greta knows he'll be back and she'll be there to help him. In a brilliant and joyful scene, Greta serves as midwife for a vampire's "birth." Petting the pulsing earth, she coaxes the creature to penetrate



Spotting a photo of bikini-clad Veronica Carlson in a tabloid, Sir James Carreras cooed the starlet in DRACULA HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE.

through the crusty orifice. Extricating herself from the graveyard plot, the vampire is immediately set upon by Van Helsing and the village priest. Greta helps the new-horn creature to escape, flinging herself at the opposition with no thought to herself. In the end, she dies to protect her master's "brides," again in direct physical conflict with Van Helsing.

DIE! DIE! MY DARLING (1965) is replete with feminine strength. Stefanie Powers, a thoroughly modern and rational American woman, is completely nonplussed by the treatment



she receives when visiting the mother of her dead fiancé. The mother, Mrs. Trefosse (Tallulah Bankhead), is a sexually-repressed, religious zealot who rigidly enforces an oath of fidelity upon Powers and her dead son. Abused and incarcerated within the Trefosse house, Powers' pity for the old woman turns to disgust and fury, she pushes Bankhead over the long-deferred edge with the only weapon she has—the truth about her son.

That the studio did acknowledge women, as capable and intelligent human beings, was taken for granted by many of the actresses. Trying to determine if this was a conscious decision made by Hammer, or if it was simple evolution, we spoke with some of the leading ladies in question. Their comments are surprisingly similar.

"I thought it was Jimmy Carreras, the head of Hammer at the time," speculated Veronica Carlson. "For me, he was. He seemed to surround himself with men of a like feeling. Well, Freddie (Francis) was the director of course. Freddie was very sensitive, and very sensitive to women I thought these directors were. Terry Fisher. These are the ones I worked with. And I feel that these men all felt that women were something that were to be treasured and respected. I think they were all of that like mind."

Barbara Shelley suggested, "I suppose that Carla, my character in THE GORGON, could have been played as more of a victim, but that isn't why Tony Nelson Keys chose me to play the part. It was because he didn't want women to be victims. So I think a lot of that probably came from Tony, the producer. Now, he produced RASPUTIN, THE MAD MONK and DRACULA, PRINCE OF DARKNESS—he and Tony Hinds, they produced all my films at Hammer. And they were



Sublime Leigh is whisked in a lobster's pot in *LOST CONTINENT*; cast in fantasy pic (*JUST FOR A VAMPIRE*), she was romantically linked to Elvis Presley



# VERONICA CARLSON

**"The Hammer experience was remarkable! We were revered as women rather than just used as women. The studio's male personnel felt females should be respected. It was wonderful!"**

very pro-women as an integral part of the film. I think that it did probably spring from them. A lot of the other films I did were not—it was just, stand still and look good. But you always had something to do when you did a Hammer film."

Hazel Court concurs. "Yes, we held our dignity and we held our rights, throughout all of them." When asked if she thought Hammer's women were only a cosmetic distraction, she emphatically replied, "It's not true at all. Absolutely not true. No. I don't think women were just ornaments. We fulfilled what we had to. We were used by the horror monsters, but that's not just being an ornament."

Shelley picks up the argument. "Well, it's imbedded in the genre itself because there are victims in the Hammer films. For example, *Dracula* victims—once they have the bite of *Dracula*, they do become vampires, themselves—they're subservient only to *Dracula*, himself. I only played a vampire once, but I did a lot of research into the Greek Furies, the evil that's within all of us, in fact, is what a Greek Fury is. That is how I studied my role when I played the vampire. The evil characters are usually the much stronger characters."

Veronica Carlson is equally adamant about her own Hammer venue: "We had brains! It was wonderful. You're voicing my own thoughts to some extent. I really hadn't thought about it consciously—but I felt it."

"And certainly all the men that surrounded me in those days—I can only speak for myself—were of that mind as well. They

treated me with respect, like I was a real person, not just a window dressing. I have been on movies where that has happened, and I feel very belittled and silly and it makes me feel very small. I'm one of these people who don't have much ego. (Laughs) I can't stand it! I get devastated by things like that and I've been on quite a few of those movies, but the Hammer thing was a whole different experience. It was wonderful. I was given some credibility. *THE GHOUL* as well, which was also directed by Freddie for Tyburn. Freddie's son, Kevin Francis, produced it.

"But the Hammer experience was remarkable. Very sensitive gentlemen here. We were revered as women rather than just used as women. It was wonderful!"

So much for critical orthodoxy. □

Geoff (71) described Julie Ege as "a Norwegian cutie, at the age of 25, she is a sex symbol, twice divorced."





Julia Strain: "This is  
Soria Velle's  
restarting of yours  
truly. It's me controlling  
the universe.

Really cool, huh? She's  
big and powerful look,  
with P.A.K.K. 2, soft  
and playful. Very femi-  
nine. Soria painted this  
one just last year."



## THE FURTHER ADVENTURES OF

# JULIE STRAIN

**HEAVY METAL'S DELICIOUS DARTH VADER ON  
THE LATEST CHAPTER OF HER S-F SAGA.**

BY LAURA SCHIFF

Other little girls dreamed of being teachers or doctors or mommies when they grew up. Not Julie Strain. She wanted to be a sex symbol. And not just your average, run-of-the-mill sex symbol, either. No, she wanted to be a sexy superhero. Now, at age thirty-five, Julie Strain is all of that and more.

"I've always loved and admired beautiful women," says Strain. "My mother kept *Ploypoy* and *Penthouse* underneath the bed. She'd go to the grocery store, and I'd sit there and read the magazines. I'd think, 'I want to be one of these ladies when I grow up.' I wanted to be a sex symbol that encompassed acting and all the other areas I really had my sights set on."

While living outside of San Francisco in a town called Concord, the 26-year-old starlet she was thrown from a horse. "I lost my memory, broke my arm, and almost broke my neck." She underwent months of physical therapy and had to learn to read all over again. "I



Julie Strain: "Ryo's vision of me—as 'Road Warrior of the World'—will serve as the cover of the '88 *Heavy Metal* calendar. Ryo captures the spirit of women."

fought my way back. I had a second chance at life." Hellbent on realizing her dream, Strain—circa 1990—moved to Los Angeles “with a garbage bag full of clothes and a pick-up truck.” She posed nude for *Playboy* and debuted as an extra in *REPOSSESSED*, an *EXORCIST* spoof. One year later, Strain was cast as an extra in a Jean-Claude Van Damme vehicle, *DOUBLE IMPACT*. Van Damme took a liking to the ingenue and humped her to a thousand-dollar role with dialogue. “It was my first screen credit,” enthuses the actress. “Some people say I took the hard way, but it worked for me. They told me, ‘Don’t ever do extra work! Don’t ever do nude scenes!’ I’d be a waitress, right now, if I didn’t do those things. It’s kind of hard to make a splash starting at that age, with no training or anything. It opened a lot of doors for me.”

R: “Big mama’s gone beast. Julie Bell’s artwork of me. We’re particularly fond of this one because it 100% applies emphasis to my mischievous side.”  
 B: “Don’t mess with me when I’ve got PM’s, okay?”



Then, for the second time in four years, the raven-haired beauty again found herself fighting for her life. "It was after the Los Angeles riots, the Rodney King thing," she recalls. "I was sleeping one night, and a killer broke into my home, came into my bedroom, and held a screwdriver to my throat. I fought him off with only my bare hands, chased him out the window, and lived to tell about it. *Star* magazine did a story on me—'Kick Boxing Penthouse Pet Turns Hell Cat!' And *HARD COPY*, too. I was a real life superhero."

Small wonder that Strain has been rendered into F.A.K.K. 2, *Heavy Metal* magazine's mascot and the namesake of the company's second, feature-length animated film. Kevin Eastman, Strain's spouse and the publisher of *Heavy Metal*, is negotiating a Spring '98 release with Columbia/TriStar, he'll wear dual hats as producer/director. Strain is lending her image and voice to the cartoon character.

We've alluded to the plot of F.A.K.K. 2 in past blurbs; well, we've finally been afforded the liberty to leak (almost) the whole story.

Central to the story is Julie (tip to animators: color her jubilant and in love). But evil extraterrestrials crash Julie's utopian action. "Something really tragic happens to Julie's parents," says Strain, "—and all the people on her planet." Pretty soon, Julie's paradise just about stinks on ice. Shauna, her younger sister, is abducted and later infected by "The Rot," as a result the sexy sibling mutates into Little Bean, a green, meen machine with attitude.

"We're holding back quite a few secrets on the plot. We don't want you to give everything away," sweetly advises Strain, "—or you may be hanged jumping with license."

Okay, so I'll condense my big "acoop" into a teaser: Julie transforms into sexed-up superhero called F.A.K.K. 2 (Federation Assigned Ketogenic Kill Zone); thus alter ego professes a penchant for red leather and big guns. "It's pretty intense," says Strain. "Her

**"They got so fucking sick of us, they said, 'Okay, we'll release the HEAVY METAL movie to video.' It sold a million copies in month #1. They helped us fund F.A.K.K. 2."**



Strain is quick to stress that F.A.K.K. 2 is "definitely not" a sequel to the initial (1981) *HEAVY METAL* movie. "The two films have nothing to do with each other," she says, "—except that they're both adult animation, with contemporary rock 'n' roll music that we all know and recognize."

While the storylines and characters of both films are not related, the cult adoration of the first did, in fact, spawn the second. "When my husband bought *Heavy Metal* magazine, the original *HEAVY METAL* movie had been shelved because the music rights at that time weren't ever paid off," notes Strain. "[Columbia/TriStar] wasn't allowed to release the movie onto video. So Kevin spent an awful lot of his money, and five years of his



L. "My first visit to Paris; my husband and I were researching an animation facility for F.A.K.K. 2." T. "We are partners in life, love & business."

itinerary includes finding the bad guys, going to different planets and battling," says Strain. "There's a lot of things that have to do with religion, getting a second chance and the Higher Being. It's like three or four different concept concepts rolled into one, but they're all pretty basic, family, love, religion, loss of love and life. F.A.K.K. 2 is a person who wants to do good and save the world. If something's not right, she'll make it right."

time, trying to get the video released. We went into Columbia TriStar on a weekly basis and begged and cried and sat there until they got so fucking sick of us, they said, 'Fuck! Okay! We'll release the movie, just get out of here!' So they released the video, and it sold a million copies in the first month. They were so impressed with how much money that one had made, that they offered to help fund the second movie."

continued on page 90

# PAULETTE BRAXTON HOMEGIRL IN OUTER SPACE

She only plays an intergalactic vamp on TV. Just thought you'd like to know. Clad in her "signature" costume—skintight enough to perpetuate the illusion it was sprayed-on—Paulette Braxton presses the flesh with the cheering Disney Studio audience. Taping another episode of **HOMEBOYS IN OUTER SPACE**, Braxton briefly retires from her alter ego—the tempestuous Amma—and graciously signs photos for the teens who chant her name. Mild-mannered and somewhat shy, Braxton admits she's just as alien to the Hollywood environment as yours truly; we both only recently landed in L.A. terrain.

"Several months ago, I was in New York auditioning for commercials and theater and stuff like that, and then I was flown out here to do a screen test for another pilot that didn't get picked up. So while I was here, the casting director over at Disney really liked me, he gave me five other scripts to read and to audition for over a two-day period. That was hectic, but I went in and auditioned for all these things.

I found out that I didn't get the other parts, so then the next day—when I went in to audition for **HOMEBOYS IN OUTER SPACE**—I just decided to go in and have fun with it. When I first heard the title, I wasn't exactly ecstatic [*loud laugh*]. I have to admit that. And when I read the part, I was meant to be a

## THE QUEEN OF THE COSMOS ON SEDUCTION & SLAPSTICK.

BY CRAIG REID



Braxton (5) poses with the **HOMEBOYS IN OUTER SPACE** (4-1) James Coohan ("Beam me up, Pippin"), Flex, Rhona Bennett, Darryl M. Bell and Kevin Michael Richardson

man that looked like a woman—an alien lifeform who is completely male but just looked like a woman, because he is from a different planet. Sort of like the **CRYING GAME**. Plus, she was supposed to be really busty and I'm not that busty [*giggles*]. So I called my agent and I'm like, 'I don't think I am ready for this part, like what is happen-

ing?' Plus, I was very depressed because I didn't get the other things."

So how did Ms. Braxton acclimate herself to masculinity? "Well, I just developed this homeboy attitude, but didn't take it over the top. I wasn't crotch-grabbing or anything like that. I just acted tougher and took the femininity out of myself. It wasn't hard. The teacher I

was working with in New York was really into giving us character work, so I was used to doing characters that were nothing like me. I took to it pretty quickly. I was surprised at myself. In theater, you spend a lot of time building your character organically, but in TV, it's really just like snappy, almost like an assembly line. You get the part, you get the script, get the character and you get to do it really, really fast. It's like, 'Whoosh, whoosh.' So I just went in to have fun and act like a guy. Then—*blah, blah, blah*—they loved it and laughed. The rest is space history."

The sitcom expands the "hood" from the suburbs to less tangible dimensions, but the humanistic goals are universal: adventure, loot, chicks. Waiting for their ship to come in, buds Morris Clay (Darryl M. Bell) and Tyherious Walker (Flex) cruise the universe in their Space Hoopy, a cross between a late 20th-century space shuttle and a 1964 Chevrolet Impala. Their competition is Amma, a ravishing mercenary who trades rare minerals and expensive cargo. She acknowledges flyweights Ty and Morris solely for the amusement they can provide her.

Clad in body-hugging black leather, Braxton's Amma is the flip side of Barbarella: "But getting into that costume is a tight squeeze, it feels like a giant condom [*laughs*]. I have been asked, 'How do you get into it?' Actually, I have to get powdered down with tal-

cum powder, and then it takes about fifteen minutes to pull it on. It's very tight, so the talcum powder helps lighten up on the friction. It's also tough to get out, but I think it's worth it because it looks fabulous.

"Most people are fascinated by the costume, and ask many questions about its feel and what it is made of. But—oh, man!—when I put that costume on, let me tell you I have no problem getting into character after that. I can feel it, my walk changes and everything I am wearing these four inch spike-heeled boots, so that changes my walk, you know, so nobody can mess with me."

So how does Braxton explain Amma's gender flip-flop—from "man trapped in a woman's body" to 100% female? "I think it was a fluke," she quips. "One of the executives was trying to figure out what would make this character work on a long term basis. I think they thought that the 'male thing' idea would work for only one show,

not the whole season. So someone said, 'Why don't we just make her a bounty hunter?' Because, after all, a bounty hunter is still tough and rugged, but then she could also play upon the sexuality as well.

"It's good that Amma is not a stereotypical character. I like the fact that she is tough, rugged and sexy, and all the men fear her [gratuitous laughter]. She is smart and in control of her own destiny, and she is more accomplished in what she does than most of the other characters on the show. It's great. I'm really the girl-next-door—easy going and soft spoken—so this is just a side of me that I will never get to use. It's something that I am exploring and just having a real fun time with it."

The studio audience has been waiting almost an hour, and they're starting to sound impatient. The warm-



Braxton as Amma on UPN's *HOMEBOYS IN OUTER SPACE*. Allusions to sci-fi include her character sparring with guest star Natasha Henstridge (*SPECIES*).

up man is tossing shirts, hats and candies into the chafing crowd. Almost time for Amma to strut her stuff. Funny, but Braxton's theatrical experience parallels *HOMEBOYS'* female/male ratio: "I co-founded a theater company called Act 5 in New York City. It was pretty much all male except me. So far, we have mostly done drama. In fact, we did this comedy drama called 'Creoles' and it was about this family living in Louisiana. I played the daughter of the foreman, who was kind of overbearing and she was trying to control me. But, what she was trying to do was get her family's land that was promised to her. The next thing we did was a play called 'Split Second,' a cop drama. In that I played the wife of this cop who had killed this man, and made it look like self defense when it really wasn't."

Braxton relates a bit of her TV background (supportive roles on *A DIFFERENT WORLD* and *NEW YORK UNDERCOVER*), and hoofing in the likes of "The Wild Rogers Follies" and "New Ziegfeld Girl." But a gopher abruptly knocks on her dressing room door and announces, "One minute till curtain!"—

Amidst a shelling of war-whooping cheers and "Go team" whistles, Braxton—carrying a nuclear missile prop—swaggered onto the set that shelters the local space bar, Jupiter Two. Ty cracks a joke about how he and Amma should get together with the bomb for a "menage-a-bomb." Another bomb was dropped by an android maitre d', who described Ty and Morris as a couple of phlegm fatales; that gag was snuffed on the cutting room floor.

During a break, we dis-

miss the development of a Hollywood trend, specifically—not unlike Hong Kong films—casting women in physically challenging roles. "I would love for them to write in some action for Amma, where she gets to fight using some really cool techniques or something like that. I have a dancer's background, so I'm really flexible and athletic. In the future, I would love to do more comedy and get into action movies. Although it looks like a lot



of hard work, it also looks fun. I'd like to play a cop, someone getting neck deep into the essence of realistic life...you know, what's going on in real life but I'm open to science fiction as well."

While taping and hanging out at Jupiter Two, our heroes engage in a slapstick brawl with space pirate Jed Eye. But the best in-joke is Pippin, an engineer—played by *STAR TREK*'s James Doohan—whining about his former starship and how that crew always says, *Beam me up, Pippin*. The show's charm is its homage to 20 years of cultural archetypes and pop icons that are exclusively locked into sci-fi entertainment. Braxton's character is a hip revision of the devil girl and space queens who seduce earth into surrender.

But I seriously doubt our planet's male populace would beg for rescue. □

# Dangerous Curves Kim-Maree Penn

KIM-MAREE PENN, AUSSIE FEMME FATALE, CREAMS HER COMPETITION—INCLUDING JACKIE CHAN & MICHELLE KHAN.

BY MIKE LEEDER

There may be some Westerners who would blindly peg Kim-Maree Penn, Hong Kong-based actress/model, as a dumb blonde. Big mistake. Even off-camera, Ms Penn is a chronic workaholic who's fueled her own business. Personally, I pity the fool who audibly addresses Penn as a bimbo. Especially if she's in listening distance. And in a bad mood. Call 9-1-1.

Did I mention Penn is martial artist and stuntwoman? Sample her show-downs with stars who have tapered their celebrity with testosterone-driven mayhem: Penn vs. Dolph Lundgren in *THE PUNISHER*. Penn vs. Wang Jan-lee in *LIVE HARD*. Penn vs. Cynthia Khan in *LINE OF DUTY 5: MIDDLEMAN* and a return match in *ULTIMATE REVENGE*. And Penn even challenges you-know-who in Namco's *Jackie Chan, Kung Fu Master* video game. But her fighting aptitude is far from an artificial con-



Aussie screen/model Kim-Maree Penn strikes poses on her Hong Kong turf. She's currently negotiating a gig as the *MERCENARY* opposite Mickey Rourke.

trivance; nope, Penn has earned a myriad of trophies and titles, including New South Wales/Australian Kumste & Kata Champion, 1983-'89; World Junior Karate Champion, Under 19-years-old division (1987). And she's still undefeated! A fledgling star in the Southeast Asian market, Penn's screen popularity is expanding on a global scale.

I caught up with the "martial arts mistress" for a rap session. The first volley of questions were the dry-as-dust formalities. Where were you born. How were you attracted to stuff like kung fu-fighting? I'll mercifully abridge this prelude to the following—

"I was born and raised in Sydney, Australia. I initially got involved with martial arts for self-defense purposes. There had been a really bad mugging and rape near where I lived, and my father decided that I should take up karate in order to defend myself.

"I started training and I have to admit that I didn't really think too much of



KIM-MAREE PENN

**"The hardest part of working on the film was dealing with that bloody snake. But I guess I got treated better than him because, at the end of the shoot, the crew cooked and ate him!"**

karate... that is, until I went to my first tournament. The competitive atmosphere and the trophies changed everything. I was motivated to start training more seriously. But what's funny is that, as I continued my training, I realized that with every belt and grading I obtained, I still had lots to learn. Even when I got my black belts—including a third Dan Black Belt in Shotokan Karate and a second degree Black Belt in Hapkido—I knew that I hadn't reached the top. I may have gone up a level but there was still so much for me to learn and experience."

Flashing back to Penn's apprenticeship, I quizzed her about an incident recounted by fellow countryman Michael Miller, who shares her hyphenated handle (martial artist-stuntman). Yeah, Mike advised me to probe into her 1-2 knockout in Japan. "That's one I'll always remember," says a grinning Penn. "My opponent was getting just a little bit too excited and kept lunging at me. But every time she entered my area, I would clock her with a kick or a backfist. I guess it just got a little too much for her because the next thing I knew, her toenail was scraping down my face. I thought, 'No more Ms. Nice Girl,' and—on the next point—I knocked her. Pow!"

Penn's pugilistic skills earned her an audition in *THE PUNISHER*, New World Pictures' adaptation of the Marvel Comics hero. "The film was directed in Australia by Mark Goldblatt," she recalls. "Dolph Lundgren, four years post-*ROCKY IV*, signed up for the title role. There was an open casting call for female

martial artists; they were needed to stunt double the actress playing Kim Myung-ae's stepdaughter. I had just won the World Championship and received a lot of press, they found me through the Karate Federation. I was subsequently hired as one of two stunt doubles."

"Working on the film was a lot of fun! I was getting paid to train, and I learned—a lot!—about the differences between real fighting and real movie fighting. My work included two Ninja-styled fight scenes and a slugfest with the Dolph in the finale. Because of working on this film, I made some connections which led to my Hong Kong invitation."

**LIVE HARD**, a police pot-boiler, served as Penn's

Serving as partial manager of Sigmat & Security, Penn's clients include Paramount Hollywood (Hong Kong)

"I got into martial arts for self-defense. There was a rape where I lived and my teacher isolated I take up karate. B. Filming the CD-ROM game, JACKIE CHAN-KUNG FU MASTER. "We're digitized—didn't have to shoot whole fight scenes."





Winston Ellis, Penn & Richard Norton between takes of *SUPREME WARRIOR*, Digital Pictures' CD-ROM game. "We filmed different outcomes for each fight."

Hong Kong debut. The cast—including Simon Yam, Ko Hung, Jason Pao Pao and Elaine Lui—supported Wang Jan-lee, the Korean mean machine whose martial arts mayhem was demonstrated in the likes of *SECRET RIVALS*, *SNUFF BOTTLE CONNECTIONS*, *SNAKE IN THE MONKEYS SHADOW* and *DRUNKEN MASTER*. Routinely cast as a bootlicking had guy, *LIVE HARD* offered Jan-lee the rare opportunity to play a hero. Penn beats Jan-lee's "kung fu cop" to a pulp. Sounds like grist for a good behind-the-scenes story, huh? Think again, Spunky. No amount of intim-

idation (i.e. begging) could prod Penn to comment on the film. While no classic, it impacted the producers of her next movie—

**LINE OF DUTY 5: MIDDLE MAN** starred Taiwanese dancer/action heroine Cynthia Khan (Yeung Lai-ching) and American-Chinese video jockey/occasional actor David Wu. Lensed in Hong Kong and Korea, the film portrayed Penn as the #1 bad guy's snake charming bodyguard. Blade kicking, jumpkicking, fists, kicks, food spitting, profanities about mothers and a sword swinging duel between Khan and Penn. Trained by stuntman

## KIM MAREE PENN

**"My only problem with Cynthia Khan was in communications. At the time, her English wasn't great and my Cantonese was nonexistent—we needed a translator for our fight scenes!"**

supreme Ridley Tsoi, Khan was decidedly inexperienced the genre.

"It wasn't too bad," notes Penn. "Cynthia is a real trooper, she did really well for a non-martial artist. We both took some heavy knocks on the film, especially with the swords and the dives through the glass. I've still got a few little scars from this film, but I guess you have to expect that when you're making action movies. My only problem with Cynthia was in communications. At that time, her English wasn't too great and my Cantonese was nonexistent. As a result, if there was a problem with a particular movement or with timing, we couldn't just tell each other. We needed to wait for the translator to help us."

"The hardest part of working on the film was dealing with that bloody snake! They had it wrapped around my arm and it kept going to sleep. To stop the snake from sleeping, they would make it angry—and then, it would either start moulting or constricting around my arm and cut off my circulation. But I guess I got treated better than him

because, at the end of filming, the crew cooked and ate him!"

Penn's subsequent film, *POLICE STORY 3: SUPER-COP*, was a Jackie Chan action saga that matched Penn with action diva, Michelle Khan. "I was originally hired for five days, to fight Michelle after a drag deal goes wrong," notes Penn. "But my five days soon stretched into three weeks as we shot and reshot the scenes leading up to our fight. Meeting Jackie Chan, was great."

Though she trades bullets with cult hero Yuen Wah, Bruce Lee's student in *ENTER THE DRAGON*, Penn's showdown with Khan is a big downer. "I run around a corner, Michelle takes my gun, kicks me and then I get shot to pieces. Squib city! I was a little disappointed that I didn't get to fight, especially in a Jackie Chan film! But they were over schedule, and that's showbiz, right?" Next time around, Penn preferred bar-league over blood baths.

The Hong Kong boxoffice gross for his *OUTLAW BROTHERS* and *PRODIGAL SON* entitled Frankie

**ULTIMATE REVENGE:** Jin Lau, director Ridley Tsoi & Revolve Rinkets pose with reunited fighter's enemies, Penn and Cynthia Khan. L: Penn dominated the ad bits.





Chan to serve dual functions—producer and star—for Movie Impact's *FUN 'N' FURY*. Hiring singers L'Amour Lai and Vivian Chow as backup, Chan was required to cast a trio of actors as "evil western hoodlums." He shunned his choices to Kundy and Canadian Wushu maestro, Bruce Fontaine who gets this choice out of dialogue: "If you wish to be my friend, you must have sex with me. All my friends have sex with me!"

Penn, as one third of the terrible threesome, steals the show; indisputably, her collision with Chan translates into the movie's best choreographed carnage. "I loved working on this film," enthuses Penn. "I had a good role, I did stuff with guns, I acted and I got into one hell of a fight with Frankie—I think it's probably the best fight scene I've had yet! It took two and a half weeks to film, because we did some very difficult combinations and the choreography was crisp. The environment and weather didn't help, fighting waist-high in freezing water isn't fun. But it was a great film to work on." Penn's performance was rewarded with a publicity bonanza; her image was plastered, internationally, on the film's posters and ads.

Penn reunited with Chan for the very strange, alleged action-comedy, *OH, YES SIR! POWER*. She promptly arrived on the set and waited...and waited...and waited... "I was supposed to fight one of the actresses in the film," grimaces Penn. "But when they realized that she couldn't fight, I became surplus to requirements and ended up just walking through a few scenes."

Another liability is the phoebest body doubling since *PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE*; in her few scenes, the 5'9" Penn—for whatever nebulous reason—is doubled by ace stuntman/Wushu champion Vincent Lau (Liu Del): "Vincent is a great guy, and he can



Penn and Zhong Zhen-ho tussle in *FUN 'N' FURY*, directed by Frankie Chan. "I loved working on this film. I had a good role, did stuff with guns, I acted and got into one hell of a fight with Frankie, I think it's probably my best fight scene to date."

move like you wouldn't believe. But he's also somewhat diminutive, he only comes up to my waist!"

Penn cites another example of impractical body doubling—specifically, *THE PUNISHER*. "The character whom I doubled for had no dialogue, no big dramatic scenes, she was there to fight and that's all. But they cast an actress for the role and then used stunt doubles for her! I'm thankful because it gave me my chance to get into the business, but,

sometimes, companies make use of stunt doubles for the wrong reasons.

"Several times in films, I've been doubled for certain movements. If it's a particularly dangerous move, or one that I've tried and can't do—or we're against the clock, and I can't get it right—then I don't mind using a stunt double. But sometimes, despite having trained for something and having the ability to do it, you end up being doubled for no reason—or for fill-in

shots. 'Hey, let me have a go, please!' It's really frustrating when you know it's something you can do, and they won't let you.

"In my most recent film, *ULTIMATE REVENGE*, they doubled me for a few shots because of time constraints. My problem? My hair is shoulder-length and blonde; but my stunt double wears a waist-length, orange wig! It's not only obvious, it makes the whole film look unprofessional."

Between pictures, Penn



Inclement weather notwithstanding, Penn gauges *FURY* as "a great film to work on. The choreography was crisp, fighting in freezing water wasn't hard."

doesn't mess around. Two years ago, her entrepreneurial and athletic metier prompted an alliance with Australia's Five Dragon Films. The collaboration produced *FIGHTING FIT*. "I prefer to call it *JANE FONDA MEETS THE KARATE KID*! It's basically an aerobic workout video that also has self-defense applications. I had the original concept, wrote the script, co-produced and hosted the video. I learned a lot about working behind the camera on this project, but I haven't been completely happy with it. So, later this year, we're going to reshot the project. If anyone wants to buy the rights, get on touch!"

Penn is negotiating a re-

sumption of her role in *TIGER STORM*, an impaired Hong Kong actioner produced under the Ed Marbe/Mark Houghton banner, East West Pictures. Once again, Penn's role is a sleazy crime lord's kickboxing bodyguard. "I already worked about two days on the film," she relates. "I have a fight scene with the lead [Gary Daniels]. He seemed pretty professional; we didn't become friends, but we seemed to work together well..." (Update, 3/20/97: *TIGER STORM* was recently completed in Canada by another company. How much of the Hong Kong footage will remain in release prints? Haven't a clue at this point.)

Stepping into the hi-tech world of video games, Penn worked on the CD-ROM *GAME Supreme Warrior* for Digital Pictures. "I worked with Vivian Wu and Richard Norton on this project. We had to do a lot of work on the choreography ourselves, but we were lucky because we had a stunt master, Don

Lam, helping us. We had to film different outcomes for each fight scene; depending on the skill of the player, the results will be different. It was a lot of work, but it was a lot of fun because everybody pulled together on it. We rehearsed for three weeks, and then spent a week filming the actual

**PUNISHER** Penn and her brother relax with screen heroes, Dolph Lundgren. Devised by Mark Gaskin, the film was an adaptation of the Marvel Comics



game up at the Shaw Brothers' studio in Clearwater Bay."

Familiar with CD-ROM technology and its inherent optional scenarios, Penn applied her training to Jackie Chan, *Kung Fu Master*. Produced by Namco, Japan's video recreational giant, the arcade game "was a lot easier to film than the other one. For this one, we were digitized so we didn't have to film whole fight scenes—just throw punches and kicks to the desired heights, and do high, medium and low reactions. I completed my stint in about four hours! I like my costume—a pink leather combat suit, thigh-high boots and a leather headband." The game tallied brisk sales in Japan and Hong Kong.

**Conclusion:** Penn has returned from the Philippines, the site of her work-in-progress *WALANG INI-URUNGAN ANG BATAS* (English: *ULTIMATE REVENGE*). The film reunited Penn with her *MIDDLEMAN* sparring partner Cynthia Khan. "I was hired by [director] Ridley Tsui to work alongside Cynthia and a top Filipino actor, Ronnie Ricketts. And at the same time as we were filming, another director—Philip Ko—began production on another movie that starred everyone from Ridley's film! He wanted me to work on his film too, but Movie City—producers of Ridley's movie—wanted to sign me to an exclusive contract. So, out of loyalty to them, I turned down Mr. Ko's movie.

"I really liked working in the Philippines, the people are really friendly and it was good to work with Cynthia again. Her English is a lot better now, and my Cantonese is a lot better, which made fighting a lot easier. And Ridley worked so hard! He was rewriting the script and, after the cameramen couldn't keep up with him, he took over the camera work. He kept a really cool head while we were filming. I hit him with a pretty good flying sidekick at one point,

#### KIM-MAREE PENN

**"I'd like to work in the West, but I don't want to run off for any project that comes along. If I'm denied the opportunity to be discriminative, I'm more than happy making movies in Asia."**



Already an icon in the Asian film market, Penn is an experienced martial artist. Titles include *New South Wales Australian Kungfu & Kato Champion* (1983-86).

and he just shrugged it off."

The good news: Penn has signed a three-year, multi-picture contract to play the *femme fatale* in films geared for expansion beyond the South East Asian market. The bad news: Penn's first contractual obligation has been postponed. It seems her co-star was arrested and imprisoned on charges of terrorism! The producers are casting for a slightly more politically correct substitute.

The actress hasn't trivial-

ized the television medium, it's just less rewarding. Regional critics concur that Penn chilled-out the hyperbolic but disappointing *ATV/STAR* TV series based on Bruce Lee's movies, *FIST OF FURY* and *THE CHINESE CONNECTION*. She endured a blistering face-off with Wushu Wonder girl, Sui Chan. "I play an evil Western warehouse owner trying to oppress the Chinese, only to get my butt kicked by Sui. She steals the show with her moves. It's

funny, but I found TV to be more laid back than films!"

Next thing you know, Penn bids you adieu and is off to her next gig; seems she's delegating authority as one of Signal 8 Security, an organization that furnishes protection for visiting businessmen and U.S. celebrities. Her client list includes Hong Kong's Planet Hollywood eatery, ample opportunity to rub elbows with the likes of Cindy Crawford, Phil Collins, Bruce Willis and many more. "I got into the bodyguard business through a combination of my martial arts and friends. It's nothing like the way they show it in films, most of the time it's a very boring job. But, occasionally, it isn't! A lot of people might want a bodyguard, but decline some hag guy replete with clichéd black suit and shades; that can often attract more trouble than you want. Whereas, if I'm with somebody, I look like I'm just some girl on their arm and less people want to swing at me. I normally talk my way out of a situation."

Kim-Maree Penn's '97 revue includes a "re-release of my self defense video. I'm continuing with my martial arts training. At the moment, I'm studying Eagle Claw and Thai Boxing. I also want to try and improve my craft as an actress. I hope to be attending next year's summer course at the National Academy Of Dramatic Arts in Australia. I'm also trying to develop a few projects, both here and the international market. I just finished one script that I would work on if Ridley Tsui and Ronnie Ricketts are interested. I am also supposed to be doing a movie with Mickey Rourke, a Luxor Production called *MERCENARY* that's likely to shoot in Hong Kong.

"I would like to work in the West, but on my terms. I don't want to just run off and do any old project that comes along. I want to try and find a good quality one, if I'm afforded the chance.

continued on page 80

# BAYWATCH NIGHTS

As long shadows of evening creep across the boardwalk, the sunny mil-lies of BAYWATCH fades into dark-ness. The lifeguards abandon their perches and head for some off-duty recreation—except for Mitch Buchannon, who's sort of a surro-gate Carl Kolchak. While his col-leagues assume the role of "poultry inspectors" (checkin' out the chicks' tan lines), Mitch is on bench patrol and ejecting "undesirables"—y'know, drunks, dopers, vampires, werewolves, martians, voodoo shamans, etc.

It was inevitable that BAY-WATCH, the most popular syndicat-ed series in the cosmos, would spawn a spin-off. Happily, an almost equally inevitable sitcom was dis-

## DONNA D'ERRICO & ANGIE HARMON VS. NIGHT MONSTERS.

BY DAN SCAFFEROTTI

voyage, Mitch and his buds checked into a haunted cabin, battled a hleb that literally hung around a deep sea oil rig and corralled a band of extra-terrestrials.

The whole BAYWATCH thing was triggered by Greg Bonann, a career lifeguard who spent ten years of his life persuading television executives that a one hour serving of beef- and chassecake would draw Nielsen. "The only thing both BAY-WATCH shows have in common is the same star and production com-pany," said Bonann, who directed fifty of the BAYWATCH episodes, in-cluding the *Terror of the Deep* and *Last Breath* segments of BAY-WATCH NIGHTS. "One series is about David Hasselhoff on-duty, and the other is David Hasselhoff off-du-ty in another job, where he's a detec-tive. The franchises are very, very different. As unique as BAYWATCH is, BAYWATCH NIGHTS is a much more familiar franchise to an audi-ence. If you've seen X-FILES or DARK SKIES, or any of those genre shows, then you know what BAY-WATCH NIGHTS is."

Hasselhoff is the only BAY-WATCH actor to make the transition to the spin-off. His supporting cast includes Angie Harmon as Ryan McBride, Mitch's partner and Eddie Cibrian as lifeguard Griff Walker. Doran Gregory plays the enigmatic Diamond Teague, who navigates Mitch through the magical, mystery tour. Finally, Donna D'Errico plays lifeguard Donna Marco, who ties-in with Mitch's day job...

"Donna is in both shows," Bonann explained, "but she started with BAY-WATCH NIGHTS and then came into BAYWATCH. Someone had to be the person in touch with the 'smarts', and have some experience, and that's Ryan. You don't want David's character knowing all the answers all the time. It's just too much to have one character be the hero, and the smart guy, at the same time. It was really a process of elimination to see what character could have that kind of franchise for the part. We think Angie brings it off spec-tacularly well."



BAYWATCH NIGHTS: T. Leading In The Celnet, David Hasselhoff & Harmon are sucked in a time warp. R: Sleuthing The Curse of the Murrelet Bay

pensed (how about I LOVE PAM, about a whacky blonde and her dufus, handleading spouse). Nope, the producers transplanted their tropical lo-cals to a nocturnal ambience; hence, BAYWATCH NIGHTS, which depicted Hasselhoff's lifeguard as an after hours gumshoe, debuted last season. But low ratings prompted the executive producers—Hasselhoff, Maurice Hurley and Greg Bonann—to scuttle the sleuthing premise. The series didn't coast on the bikini/jungle venue of its precursor, hence, another

gimmick was critical to reel-in an audience. One fact didn't elude Hassel-hoff & Co: while their show was floun-dering, THE X-FILES was a smash hit getting major media exposure.

The amended version of BAY-WATCH NIGHTS premiered with an episode titled *Terror of the Deep*. Not a crime lord or crooked gambler in sight; nope, Mitch had bigger fish to fry—specifically, a legendary East Asian monster, called an "Ajagun," that made itself at home aboard a sunken freighter. During subsequent weekly

The polarity of their characters notwithstanding, the careers of actresses Angie Harmon and Donna D'Errico closely parallel; both are Cinderella stories.

However, in lieu of a magic pumpkin, D'Errico is perfectly content with a stretch limousine. Not long ago, the blonde beauty chipped-in on a luxury car to acquire clients around Las Vegas. The service earned her a *Playboy* pictorial abhorsomely titled "Driving Miss Donna." Get it? "We didn't even have a livery license," said D'Errico, her voice still reverberating with a bad cold she has almost shaken. "Actually I had been taking acting lessons for about six months prior to *Playboy*. They hired me for BAYWATCH NIGHTS with the intention of putting me on BAYWATCH. I'd be on both shows like a bridge between the shows. This year, BAYWATCH NIGHTS has been altered by the paranormal, Sasquatch, voodoo and swamp monsters. I guess it can be compared to THE X-FILES. My character, Donna Marco, is like me...but a little more hallelujah, I guess. She tries to keep her composure in scary situations."

She cites the aforementioned *Last Breath* as "one of my heavier episodes. I'm handcuffed in the back seat of the car, with three other captive passengers, and driven off a cliff! We actually did the underwater shot in a real car that was submerged beneath the water. What a fun thing that was to do! It's kind of scary, because I'm locked-in with a seat belt and my hands are tied behind my back. It was a two-door car, and I was in the back, so you know there's no easy way to get out. It was a little scary but it turned out really well. I expressed a lot of emotions and stuff, which was really cool for me."



"I'm a lifeguard on BAYWATCH," says Donna D'Errico, "and I reprise the role on BAYWATCH NIGHTS but, most of the time on the show, my character is depicted during her off duty time."

"It was filmed in a tank, a chlorine tank, without goggles you can't see down there. They take the air away from you and close the door. So there's four of us in down there, without air, holding our breaths and not able to see. It's really scary, so you don't have to act too much. They shot for 10-15 seconds and then they opened the doors. There's a water safety person for each actor, and they immediately put air tubes in our mouths."

Angie Harmon's casting, as Mitch's sidekick, merges "brains n' beauty." Upon graduating from her Texas high

school, Harmon relocated to New York for modeling gigs. One plum assignment required her dispatch to Orlando for the grand opening of Planet Hollywood.

"Basically, I've wanted to act my whole life," said Harmon, recalling her eventful flight to Florida. "I didn't think I had a chance in hell, honestly. David came up to me and said, 'Hi, I'm David Hasselhoff and I'm a happily married man and I don't find you attractive at all.' I said, 'Thanks.' He told me that he had this great part for me on his new show, BAYWATCH NIGHTS. I basically laughed at him. 'I thought, 'No way in hell am I going to be running around in lingerie at night.' I kind of dismissed it."

"About three months later, I was out in California. A guy that I was seeing just happened to be going to audition for BAYWATCH NIGHTS. We walked in and David—unaware I was in his office—was saying, 'Where's that girl I met on the airplane? We've got to find her.' It blows my mind the way it happened. It's one in a million and I thank God every day for it."

Harmon introduces something unique to the *Baywatch* saga, an effervescent femininity

and pansche that's inherently sexy. No silicone, no jiggle, no dental-floss bikini. Harmon is naturally hot. "Ryan is definitely fully clothed at all times," said the actress. "She's a forensic criminologist. She's strong willed and witty. There aren't a lot of things that really scare Ryan. She has a martial arts degree and she uses guns, and the whole nine yards. Growing up in Texas, shooting guns was pretty much a given. I've always been real comfortable with guns. I've got a gun in my house. But, usually, if there's any action to do, Mitch is there to do it."

Harmon admits that she has not yet been classically trained nor dramatically disciplined. But, never mind her lack of experience, the steely ingenue approved the role and was instantly "terrified the first day on the set. My first scene was to wipe lipstick off of David's mouth. Obviously, Ryan had feelings for him and has to make some smartass comment, and then turn around and leave. The smartass comment and the anger I could get to; but here was a man I'd just met 15 minutes before our scene together—and we weren't friends or anything—and I'm trying to show that I have feelings for this man, and do all that sort of stuff."

So just how unfamiliar was Harmon with the movie making process? When the couple concluded one scene, Hasselhoff beamed, "It was a great shot! Let's shoot a closeup." Harmon interpreted the film vernacular as a call for a complete retake, unaware that a closeup required a different camera setup.

"Last season, I didn't know anything," Harmon confessed. "This season, I know what to do. I can take the character more places. I can cry now, if I need to. I can, if necessary, be vulnerable. Before, I couldn't because I didn't know how to get there. I've got to be such good friends with David. No, the show may not be Shakespeare. No, the show may not be the greatest thing on earth. But I know when we have great scenes, and I know when David and I have a moment."

Taking a cue from Scully and Mulder, the alliance between Mitch and Ryan is strictly platonic. "I think the thing that throws Ryan are the feelings that she has, but tries to hide," explains Harmon. "To me, what makes the relationship between Mitch and Ryan is the fact that they both feel for each other, although they try to keep that secret away from each other. The fact is they're great friends and, if they weren't working together, they'd be together. That's what makes their relationship great."

Harmon's reaction to the series' genre crossover is decidedly mixed: "I don't mind it and the whole country is going for the X-FILES type of shows. The paranormal and stuff, I don't



Angie Harmon, cast as the gutsy Ryan McBride, notes her character "is fully clothed at all times. As a forensic criminologist, she's strong willed and witty."

mind. But we did a show on devil worship—and that, I do mind. I even have strong feelings about the fact that they sell Ouija boards in toy stores. Not to mention the fact that one of the shows has me conjuring up a spirit—by accident, mind you!—and having to deal with it. I understand that my job, as an actress, is to pull off my role; but you can really tell in that show that I was having a problem with it.

"And it's simply because most of our audience is in their twenties and younger, and I don't think that's something that I'd want to be putting out there for these kids. They've got enough problems with guns, drugs, and sex and all that kind of thing. They don't need something else. Hey, check it out; you can conjure up the devil, too! The supernatural and UFO, that kind of stuff I don't mind. But I'm not real big on devil worship, I don't really care for that. It's like I would never do a cigarette campaign. The fact that we're on TV gives us a lot of visibility. I'd rather be doing something more positive. Devil worshipping doesn't have to be one of them."

"I love all that stuff. I believe there's life out there. I don't believe

that we're the only existing life form in the entire universe. And it's such a big thing right now."

Some traits of the Ryan McBride character are driven by Angie Harmon, herself. While the distaff half of the BAYWATCH family are literally soaking in it, Harmon's character is anchored in dry land: "Ryan is terrified of the ocean. She doesn't feel comfortable there, she doesn't know what's going on around her in the water. And that's pretty much from my own experience as well. I can get into the ocean if it's clear and it's five feet deep, and I can see everything around me. But if it's murky and it's dark and stuff is floating around in the water, and I can't see my kneecaps, then—no!—I'm not getting in. The fact that Ryan resists water is definitely inspired by her embodiment, Angie Harmon."

"I like to think that Ryan's sense of humor is like mine. I think that Ryan is a little more subdued than I am. I'm usually cracking jokes, and trying to make people laugh, a lot more than Ryan does. But Ryan definitely has her one-liners—throwing people off, making people laugh, things like that. Especially in critical moments."

"I play the female lead. Ryan is there all the time. As long as I have a great cheeseburger of a script and I can get into it—tear it up and have a great time with it—then, I'm okay."

Mitch and Ryan kick amoebic butt in *The Rig*, episode #2 in the revised series. The couple investigates an oil worker's injury on a floating rig. Ryan is adamant that a single-celled organism leaked through the pipe and attacked the crewman. Enlightened audiences, of course, will be waxing nostalgic with allusions to THE BLOB and X-THE UNKNOWN. "That was the most difficult," Harmon laughed as she recounted the early morning call. "We shot 30 minutes offshore. I'd be leaving the house at 3:30 AM to make a 5:30 AM makeup call. It's harder on location. When you're going on your fifth or whatever month of shooting, you don't even think you can get out of bed anymore. I have to remind myself that, 'This has happened to you for a reason, Angie. Get your ass out of bed.'"

**"When offered the role, I thought, 'No way in hell am I going to be running around in lingerie at night.'"**

"You have to remember that when we're shooting on these boats, our main camp that we have to go back to is another boat. Underneath our long sleeve shirts, we have those things that push on your veins so you don't get motion sickness—they're these little wrist bands. Most people wear them. You really can't take Dramamine because it makes you so tired. On that episode on the rig, our poor director was just throwing up everywhere."

The *Rig* also furnished Harmon with another acting lesson; specifically, reacting to things that aren't there. The gelatinous organism, which threatens to engulf the oil rig, was—"for the most part"—optically inserted during the post-production phase. One scene, however, required Mitch's interaction with the monster. "We were actually in the middle of switching special effects teams in that show," said Harmony, "—so we didn't see what we were reacting to! The monster looked like a giant fake vomit and they wouldn't let us see it. At the end of the show, we finally got to see it. David looked at it and said, 'No, that's not going to work.' We come around a corner and I looked at David, and he looked at me, and we're looking at this giant puke. David just looked at me. I broke out of character and said, 'I don't know whether to laugh or cry. I'll laugh.' David said, 'I'll cry' and we just walked away from it."

Harmon has recently wrapped her debut film, *LAWN DOGS* with Kathleen Quinlan and Chris McDermott. She plays a Kentucky debutante, a member of the upper crust country club set who is secretly in love with the lawn boy (McDermott). The affair is strictly on her terms, since she risks the ridicule of her aristocratic peers.

"My character is wearing her little tennis outfit," grinned Harmony, "and she's just been playing golf and has her diamonds and



The *Rig* episode: Harmon and guest Jennifer Campbell meet the show's homage to vintage monster movies, specifically *X-10: UNKOWN* and *THE BLOB*. "The monster looked like giant fake vomit," says Harmon.

her bracelets and she stops by his little trailer for a quick romp. It was pretty hilarious."

The actress soon found out that there are significant differences between shooting a television series and feature films. "I love my show," said Harmon, "but because we're all such good friends, and we hang out together for six months, the cast and crew basically become my family for that six month period. I know all of them and we like to kid around. It was much more serious on the movie set. These people don't kid around. It was all business."

Though single, Harmon hardly lives alone. Returning to her Hollywood Hills home, she's greeted by her dogs and a cat. As she fed Hercules, a goldfish, Harmon pondered her future. Perhaps—just perhaps—alluding to

Baywatch babes who exploited their celebrity for nominal dividends, Harmon is pushing for career longevity.

"I'm a Leo," she nods. "I love the fact that I'm achieving what I've always wanted to do. I love the fact that I get paid to pretend. I love the fact that I got the job because God has a plan for me, and He put me here because what happened to me doesn't happen to many people. When you're on the right track, you know it. Okay, I'm twenty-four years old and I'm on the right track—so let the games begin, let it all unfold."

"I believe you set a pattern for yourself. There are many paths laid out there in front of you. You just need to choose which one. For example, if you want to do the *Playboy* road, more power to you. If you want to do the B-movies and all that sort of stuff, hey!

whatever you want. The career that I admire most is Michelle Pfeiffer's because she can play a complete drug addict in *SCARFACE* and then play a Victorian in *AGE OF INNOCENCE*, and then *Catwoman*. She has that range. She can be comfortable in any role. If you don't aim for the stars where are you going to go?"

"I'll quit before I go to the B-movies. If it's not working, then the plan will change. I pray to God I don't have to be faced with that situation because I don't think I'll do it." □

Hesseltail & Harmon are rejuvenated by Night Whispers. "Mitch and Ryan try to conceal their feelings for each other," says Harmon. "They're great friends."



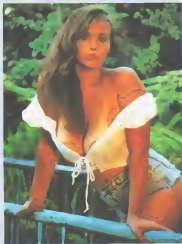
# The Actresses of SOFT BODIES

BECKY LEBEAU, FORMER SCI-FI STARLET, ORGANIZES A  
VENUE OF VIDEO VIXENS—ALL OF WHOM SCOTCH SILICONE.

BY DAN SCAPPEROTTI

"Becky LeBeau is the best dumb blonde in Hollywood," said director Jim Wynorski, quickly adding that once he yelled "Cut!" she got smart again.

The voluptuous actress is an accomplished musician and astute businesswoman



"We cast Tamera Lee (top) in *CURVY AHEAD*. Popular with fans, she abandoned the biz." Left, "INVITATIONAL" was our first professional *SOFT BODIES* video."

who has been active in films since the early Eighties and was played supporting roles in the likes of *TAKIN' IT ALL OFF*, *NOT OF THIS EARTH*, and *DINOSAUR ISLAND*. "I'm never going to be a Meryl Streep-type actress, and I don't necessarily want to or need to," said LeBeau. "But I like comedy. I would like to start producing my own films. That's my next goal. A sexy comedy. I love playing the dumb blonde, the bimbo because that's part of my personality. I might be very intelligent, but I'm also still kind of dumb about certain things and naive about certain things."

When LeBeau appeared as herself in the 1987 video, *BECKY BUBBLES*, she saw the profits generated by the tape and realized the potential of exploiting herself. Capitalizing on her own name recognition and bosomy physique, LeBeau cast herself and other equally well-endowed models for her first *SOFT BODIES* video.

"I came up with *Soft Bodies*," said LeBeau, "because







Lolita: "Thought this sparkly jumpsuit was kinda' perfect for a **SOFT BODIES** shoot! But the sequins left red indentations on my bodice! Though it's photogenic, I decided to wear the outfit for our video. Nope, I reserved it only for this **FF** session."



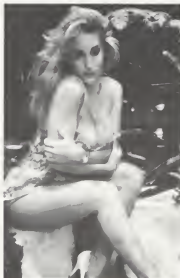
"This is Julia Hayes, who appeared in our BATHING BEAUTIES video. She's billed a little less! Julia is an actual lover, a true girl-next-door. Her goal? To be a spokesperson. For some reason, I got all her National Geographic stuff."

there's so many models in town who have the 'hard-body' kind of breasts. There aren't that many soft, natural, pretty girls around. I thought I would put out a video that promotes soft, natural, pretty girls as opposed to the hard, artificially-enhanced girls. That was just sort of my little gimmick, and I put together a 30 minute video. Now that I look back at it, it was kind of amateur-looking. It was my first show, and I really didn't know what I was doing."

Nevertheless, the video was picked-up by the Playboy Channel, a measure of prosperity that prompted LeBeau to launch a **SOFT BODIES** series. Formulaically, LeBeau adheres to a "can't-miss" scenario: hand-said hikinis, nude sunbathing, skinny-dipping. An ensemble of centerfolds and starlets—Mason Marconi, Elaine Dahl, Lynn Monroe, Kylie Rose, Julia Parton (aka Nina Alexander), et al—jiggle through jokes so derivative of Benny Hill that one expects the final credits to roll over a fast-motion "chase" scene, replete with Ye&etty-Sax refrain. Until 1995, her company produced only one video per year but LeBeau has subsequently edited and released 2-3 titles annually. The series is now exclusively licensed to Pay Per View's Hot Choices Channel.

Back in issue 41, actress/FF staffer Tina Desiree Berg wrote, "You gotta love superficiality, it's as inherently Hollywood as boob jobs and drug addiction." LeBeau has somehow engaged Tinseltown "bodies" that have blossomed sans silicone. "I find my models the same way other people find them," she grins. "I go through certain agencies that book girls for nude magazine layouts and videos like mine. Also, word of mouth, everyone really enjoys working for us because we're fun and we pay well, and we treat everyone nicely. It's not that hard of a job and we don't

**"I launched a franchise with a gimmick; my **SOFT BODY** videos would promote soft, natural, pretty models as opposed to the hard, artificially-enhanced girls."**



"Heather Kennedy [l] & Rachel Love [r] were cast in our **BEYOND BLONDE** video. Heather models for cars & calendars. Rachel turned 18 when we filmed her."

expect them to do anything sleazy. So they refer their friends—girls who are hustly and non-artificial—to our series. Now it seems that more models are coming to me through mutual associates. After all, we promote the girl-next-door image; everyone would prefer to be portrayed in this capacity rather than the video franchises that make models appear hard, trashy and slutty."

Each of the videos are

introduced by bikini-clad LeBeau, who segues into abridged bios of her guests. "The first model I ever hired was Julia Parton [FF 2-2]," related LeBeau. "Julia was natural and I'm certain she still is. She had been in the business—since a 1982 issue of *Penthouse*, I think—longer than me. Since we're both busty girls, and we had shot a poster together, she seemed right for the tape. We even did a movie together, with Gail Harris [FF

4-2], called **TAKIN' IT ALL OFF** [87]."

Antonia Dorian, cast in the fourth **SOFT BODIES** installment (1992's **PARTY FAVORS**), "happens to be one of my best friends," revealed LeBeau. "I met her through a mutual girlfriend. Back then, my videos had not yet turned full nude; they were just topless. Antonia was a little hesitant to even do the topless shots!"

The Virginia born Dorian was raised in the deserts of Las Vegas. As a high school student, she enrolled in acting and dance classes; the education paid off via her gig as a hooper in Lake Tahoe's revue, "Playboy's Girls of Rock and Roll." An appearance in **MISSING REWARDS**, a syndicated TV



show shot in Vegas, earned Dorian a SAG card and a one-way ticket to L.A.

An acquaintanceship with LeBeau bought Dorian an introduction to director Jim Wynorski, who cast the newcomer in **HOME FOR CHRISTMAS**, **DINOSAUR ISLAND** and the **WASP WOMAN** remake; other credits include **TAKIN' IT OFF OUT WEST** and **BIKINI CAR WASH**.

"Becky asked me to do her video," Dorian remem-

bered. "At first, I hesitated because I don't like doing a lot of topless stuff. It was fun doing that because, I like being sexy. I move around, be sexy and take my top off slowly. I'm in lingerie—a lot!—and a bikini. Then Becky and I do a little scene. The only place I'll do nudes is *Playboy* or *Penthouse*.

The actress has sworn-off silicone: "I was going to have a boob job a couple of months ago, but I decided not to; I mean, what if I liked my boobs better the way they were before? The reason I was going to have it done was because women's breasts always seem so perky if they have implants.

"I work out, so my boobs build muscles, they can be a little hard, not so soft. So I try to keep my breasts as perky as I can. I wear

**"I met with Becky and found her so friendly. She asked me to get a tan, I was too pale for her. Her *SOFT BODIES* was a good arena for me to show my best assets."**



"Antonia Dorian [l], our star for *PARTY FAVORS* [r], appeared with me in *DINO-SAUR ISLAND & BOOY CHEMISTRY* 3. One of my best pals she's very sweet."



padded bras a lot, but I want to look good if I want to wear something without a bra. But breast implants can be really horrible."

Another *PARTY FAVORS* player, Julia Hayes, once again endorsed as a Soft Body in LeBeau's latest, *BATHING BEAUTIES*. "Some of the girls in my videos are my friends," explained LeBeau. "They feel funny about me paying them. But it's a business. Julia is really, really popu-

lar pin-up model; she's very sweet, real down home. She doesn't do movies. There are some girls who don't do the B-movies because they're already popular via their modeling layouts."

A western gal who grew up in Montana, Hayes launched her entertainment career while studying zoology at Seattle's University of Washington. Approached by *Penthouse* for an October, '91 layout, Hayes was promptly elevated to star

status on the "adult club" circuit and took her show on the road.

"It's a lot of money and a lot of fun," Hayes admitted. "I'm in no hurry to quit. I've been in all the adult magazines. In fact, I was on the stands in *The Girls of Penthouse* [December, 1996]." Julia Hayes is not my real name. "

The circuit can be a grueling experience with club dates stretching from 3-7 days, 4 shows a night. "It

gets tiring," Hayes sighed. "When you get to a club where they're not that friendly, you've got to tough it out for a week. But then if you land a club where everyone is real friendly, then it kind of bites that you have to leave. You end up going back to the same clubs maybe 3-4 times a year."

As a dancer, Hayes prefers the blue collar environment. It's all a matter of economics. "I don't like going to the white collar clubs," she said. "Everyone is more friendly in the blue collar clubs. It seems the people who wear the suits and the ties sometimes are a little bit too cool to tip. That's not always the case, but if you go to a blue collar town like Fargo everyone is just really cool and they like the shows and they just like to have fun after work."

"Some places, I'm totally nude when I dance. Some places are topless and in other places it's a bikini bar. I go to a lot of clubs that are bikini bars where you have to keep your top and bottom on. In others, you wear G-strings or pasties or latex. Every county has it's own little rules. Fargo is topless. Memphis, my home town, is nude."

Hayes gauges LeBeau's video concept as "great, especially in our business. There are hardly any girls on the road with real breasts. I like it as a credit because when you say *SOFT BODIES*, they know that you don't have the implants."

"I guess a lot of time, especially in our business, some lean on that old 'edge, the bigger the better. When I first started back in 1991, my agent wanted me to get implants. Now he doesn't, because the trend has kind of reversed."

*BATHING BEAUTIES* united Hayes and LeBeau with Sarah Jane Hamilton, a veteran of both B-movies and over 100 adult features. The red haired beauty's delightful accent betrays her United Kingdom origins. Matter of fact, Hamilton traces her initial celebrity to

stinks as a nude dancer in British cabarets and posing for English publications such as *Mayfair* and *Men Only*; naturally, she earned notoriety as a topless Page 3 model. During one of her stateside visits, she met adult film director John T. Bone who immediately signed the Brit bombshell to a 14-picture contract. Hamilton has recently graduated college with a B.A. in Business Administration to compliment her A.A. in Apparel Manufacturing.

"I met with Becky and I found her so sweet," said the hazel-eyed Hamilton. "We set up a date, and she asked me to get a tan. I think I was too pale for her. We shot at this house and we did four vignettes, including topless volleyball. It was a good arena for me to show-off my best [34D-24-34] assets."

Hayes was the first adult film actress to create and write her own line of autobiographical comic books, distributed under the Carnal Comics banner. Hamilton likens her sensuous stories to *The Canterbury Tales* and vignettes spun by Scheherazade.

Turning to the adult film route wasn't an easy decision for Hamilton. The night before her first performance of "boy/girl" scenes in *RAIN-WOMAN 5*, she lapsed into a personal inquisition: "I was extremely nervous. What would my parents think? What would my friends think? Would I ever be able to find a boyfriend after this? Health risks, health factors; where do I go from here? What if it went wrong?"

Director John T. Bone subdued Hamilton by matching her with another female for the initial round of impassioned scenes: "John organized it that way so he could warm me up as it were because, at the time, I felt much more comfortable doing girl-girl movies. I don't do movies any more. But if I ever went back to adult movies, I would feel more comfortable doing girl-



"The 18-year-old Candace Avery appeared in our latest, *ALL AMERICAN GIRLS*; thus far the video is only accessible on Pay-Per-View. Candace, raised in Wichita, Kansas, is resuming her college education; she'll graduate as a lawyer."

girl movies... not because I'm a lesbian, but there are just so many complications with boys. I like to be a healthy, fit person and your body gets run down working those long hours."

Hamilton notes that, contrary to public perception, sexual gratification in X-rated films is an illusion: "It's hard to feel erotic with ten people standing around eating donuts, talking, moving things around, rushing past your naked ass. For the most part, I had a damned good time. I liked most of the boys. I really enjoyed myself, especially with the girls—they're sweethearts."

But Hamilton also confided, "The girls really don't want to be there, and can be slightly mean and rude to

**"Casting sessions for B-films were cluttered with youthful starlets so gorgeous, they belonged on the cover of *Vogue*. But they don't make it; too competitive."**



7: Danielle Ashb's web: <http://www.danielle.com>. She wrapped a syndicated show, *BEACH PATROL*.<sup>8</sup> L: "Kistal drove from Texas to appear in our videos."



the boys. They have to not only maintain an erection, but give a pretty damn hot scene. It's hard when a girl is biting her nails and saying to the guy, 'Hurry up!—get wood or I'm leaving.' It's difficult for a man to keep an erection. You have to have sex in the oddest positions for at least a complete hour, nonstop. But the guys who do it are really into themselves, into their dicks, and really love it."

Circumventing the X-

industry, Hamilton tried to develop roles in more mainstream entertainment. "But when I started my career in B-movies, I had to go to casting sessions and get rejected. There was a heavy of beauties that were so unbelievably gorgeous, you wonder what they're doing in Hollywood and why they're not on the cover of *Vogue*. But they don't make it. I can't remember any girl, at any casting session, who's famous. It's too hard.

"Being an X-rated movie star is quite literally being a movie star. Now, people may say you're not a Michelle Pfeiffer or Winona Ryder but I have people who recognize me. Women come up to me and say, 'Oh, my husband and I love you. You're our favorite star, please sign the back of this napkin.' For the money it's quick, it's fast, and it's over much quicker."

Almost on cue, LeBeau resurfaces near an outdoor sauna as Hamilton retires to

a garden. The entrepreneur admits that budgets lock her SOFT BODIES videos to L.A. locales. "I usually rent out a nice house," said LeBeau, "—often from a dirty old man, or someone who wants to see girls take off their clothes. Of course, I pay a location fee. Since we're sort of a small crew, people don't mind us coming into their houses. Occasionally, we shot a couple of things in my house, but I rent out larger houses for the day or whatever. They're all within driving distance.

"Once, I found the ideal house in a location book. I told the female owner I was shooting a *Playboy*-type thing, that the girls would be in lingerie or in their birthday suits. She agreed, but I don't think she really heard me well because she had her kids and her husband there. When the girls started to unveil, she was quite surprised and had to get rid of her husband and the kids. She was kind of shook up."

"We've never been daring enough to have nudity going on in more public locations. We've shot in the front of my house, and my parent's house, but I've never done nudity in a public place. I was very close to being arrested for one job as a nude model. The photographer took me up in a canyon in the Hollywood Hills and gave me a big raincoat. Once the traffic went by, I had to take off the raincoat. Someone must have spotted us because a police car came by. We talked our way out of it, but I was very nearly arrested. 'Public indecency.' This was years ago, but that experience kind of scared me a little. We also don't have the kind of budget to obtain permits and stuff for beaches. We just go to private residences where neighbors don't look in."

Danielle Ashb appears in two SOFT BODIES sagas, *DOUBLE EXPOSURE* and *PILLOW TALK*. A 35-23-35" beauty from Seattle, Ashb was hired to in local adult clubs when she was 17 years



"We cast Brit bombshell, Sarah Jane Hamilton, in our SOFT BODIES video, **BATHING BEAUTIES**. She resigned from a brief career in adult entertainment [top] to become a fashion designer—believe me, she's capable of dressing, & undressing, herself."



"Mason Marconi was a pivotal 'soft body' in our SHOW 'N' TELL times. She's also very visible in SHOWBOAT as one of the Vegas strippers; Mason is stopped on the butt by a leading character. Weird, but she abruptly disappeared!"

old. Looking for greener pastures, Ashe moved south to Los Angeles where she found the clubs didn't meet her expectations. The young model organized Video Bliss, an outlet tailored to produce and distribute her own videos, however, economic reality soon reared it's ugly head.

"I soon found that advertising was expensive," said Ashe, "and I couldn't afford to start placing ads. I started calling magazines to see if I could work out some sort

of deal to get free advertising. I ended up modeling trying to advertise my videos. Ultimately, I decided that the modeling was more fun and I started doing videos for other people and then distributing them through my company, Video Bliss. That was much easier than producing them myself.

"I started out as a house dancer; I really enjoyed that, and did it for a lot of years. A house dancer works a certain club regularly. A

feature is someone who has done magazines, maybe made a movie, and has some sort of claim to fame and is the headliner. The club hires these girls to draw customers for maybe three or four shows per night. They travel from club to club every week. After I did some modeling, I became a feature but hated the travel. It was unsettling."

Working solo also eroded the credibility of her employers. Concluding her latest circuit in Jacksonville,

Florida, Ashe "was arrested! The club owner lied to me about the local laws. He told me I could dance topless. I found out later, when I was behind bars, that was against the law. That was the experience that persuaded me to drop out of feature dancing. If you've never been to jail, you don't want to go there..."

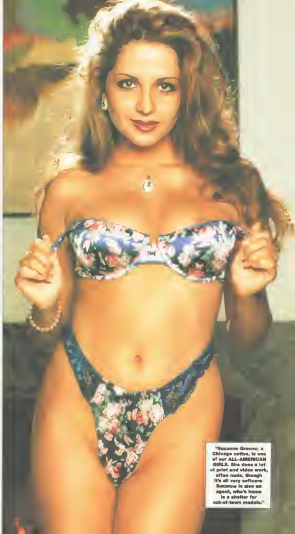
Returning to L.A., Ashe was advised by an agent to make an appointment with LeBeau. "Filming with Becky is fun," she smiled.





"She puts a lot of effort and a lot of care into making you look good. This is something that I really appreciate, because I've done so many video tapes that I pop into the VCR and just cringe."

Slightly shell-shocked after her Florida experience, Ashe decided to take some training in computer programming. Upon surfing the net, she was soon hooked on webs: "I knew that's what I wanted to do. I taught myself how to build it. I'm at [www.danniele.com](http://www.danniele.com). We



"Suzanne Greene, a Chicago native, is one of our ALL-AMERICAN GIRLS. She does a lot of print and video work, often nude. Though it's all very softcore, Suzanne is also an agent, who's home is a shelter for out-of-town models."



**"Julia Parton was cast in two of our videos. Formerly 'the world's most frequently photographed nude model"—over 400 layouts—Julia is also a singer. She's literally tickled to death in a Bondage video titled COUNT TICKLE."**

sell merchandise and do video teleconferencing." Photographing a spread titled "Women of the Internet", *Playboy* invited Ashe to peel down to her personal software; she dutifully leaped in the back of a limousine for her pictorial.

Lately, Ashe has limited her dancing to the privacy of a junket christened The Boob Cruise. The vessel sets sail for the Caribbean with a full complement of "big breasted models and featured dancers. The fans pay to come along on the cruise. You do a bunch of amateur photo shoots. Everyone just hangs out in the Caribbean, and it's a lot of fun."

Given the option, Ashe would discourage female entertainers from succumbing to silicone. "I've seen a couple of girls ruin their modeling careers by getting boob jobs. They think it's going to make them more marketable. I know in the case of the girls who got really big, enormous breast implants, that they do it to make more money on the road. The bigger your measurement, the more you make. It's like a freak show. Most of the girls I know with implants aren't very happy about them...they want to take them out."

Ashe's bombshell image has intersected other media. Sample her casting in two CD ROM releases, *WHEEL OF FANTASY* and *CRYSTAL FANTASY*. The latter was shot by Ken Marcus, a popular *Penthouse* photographer; naturally, the game's scenario involves interactivity with six stunning starlets....

As Ms. Ashe sauntered off to the pool, Becky LeBeau traipsed past a tripod. "There is a director and it happens to be me," she laughed while flipping through pages of dialogue. "In my videos, the girls look in the camera and they smile and they're very charming. That's because I'm telling them what to do. Some of the girls are a little more natural than others and I don't need to say

**"I was arrested! The club owner lied to me about local laws. He told me I could dance topless. I later found out, when I was behind bars, it was really illegal!"**



"Taylor St. Clair didn't like her *SOFT BODIES* video [?]—thought she was too fat! We did a 'Lolita' fantasy anyway. Try it working on her psychology doctrine."

much. But there are certain type angles that I need to get. I need to get butt shots...I need to get a certain amount of coverage and certain looks."

Contractually, LeBeau is obligated to appear in each *SOFT BODIES* video: "I'm directing one moment and in there taking off my clothes the next. Besides, the fans would be disappointed if suddenly Becky dropped out of her videos." Her multiple assignments

include interviewing a each model and writing compatible copy for voice overs.

Naturally, LeBeau is heir to cyberspace technology. "I have my own website," she said, "<http://www.softbodies.com>. Right now, we're selling videos and pictures on the web. People can click on maybe three nude pictures of their preferred *SOFT BODY* model. Now we're applying video to the web. I think it's going to be set up as a pay-per-view

video where people don't have to download the video, but it can stream in and people can instantaneously see my video clips on the internet."

Less than a half hour later, LeBeau resumed post-production on her latest *SOFT BODIES*, she spends one month pre-editing her tapes at home on a sophisticated program called D-Vision.

Did I mention? LeBeau, who has written songs for her exploitation movies, scores the *SOFT BODIES* videos: "I spend 3-4 months out of the year recording music. I sing in a lot of them as well. And I take it very, very seriously. I did a patriotic, jazz version of *America the Beautiful* for one of our *SOFT BODY* videos, *ALL-AMERICAN GIRLS*, it's



performed over the last segment with me in a red and white striped bikini."

As I bid her adieu, "the best dumb blonde in Hollywood" sequestered herself in the editing room and turned-up the volume on a slow-mo hadminton game. *Voiceover: "It's me, Becky! Camera lingers on her buns as she bends over—one, two, three times—to retrieve a shuttlecock! Stay tuned for some very hot Soft Body action!"*

## LEXX

continued from page 6

'50s sci-fi and modern gross-out. LEXX leans on maybes for chuckles; not even children are spared Donovan's panache for black humor.

While the pilot episode is refreshingly bereft of technology as a plot equalizer, it coasts on coincidences. But even if audiences quibble with the story subterfuge, it's likely they won't beef about the illusion of production value. LEXX was envisioned as a showcase for Toronto's C O R E., an O'Connell best known for optically juicing THE OUTER LIMITS and TEK WAR. The company, infusing LEXX with computer animation in 65% of its scenes, effortlessly melds the actors into futuristic backdrops. Nevertheless, LEXX occasionally trips on its low budget (\$15 million spread over quadruple TV movies); curiously, the least effective



Veronica Carlson poses for DRACULA HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE. (1986) Her etchings of Chris Lee (L.) helped to launch her career as an artist.

moments involve the cheesy physical sets.

The good news: LEXX's set design dwarfs competitive sci-fi series with an odd meshing of medieval and futuristic ornamentation. Maybe this world will make sense one day, but it sure doesn't now. That's why it's so much fun.

The phallic-shaped Lexx craft is a cool idea (a living spaceship/insect) but its realization is a disappointment; all dark, gooey caverns and a

sparse bridge. Try to picture Captain Kirk navigating Monster the whale. Does the crew have to hang around these drab sets in future episodes?

I guess we'll find out in episode #2. □

## INGRID PITT

continued from page 34

films—in general—is a matter of focus," shrugs Pitt. "—close-ups on heaving bosoms and whirling tensors occupy a lot of screen time, and make an

impression.

"If this all sounds like I'm a guerrilla feminist, forget it. The hand that rocks the cradle..." and all that. But it would be nice, just once, to play the staker rather than the stake and to advance menacingly onto a big butch bloke in a diaphanous shroud who screams and squirms futilely..."

That might be a bit much, even for Hollywood in the nineties. □

## HAMMER MERCHANDISE

continued from page 19

target and the Hammer women are gorgeous. We nostalgically recall the films for their color and cleavage, and our guest roster highlights that legacy." The big Hammer weekend is scheduled for June 20-23. For further info, contact PANEX, 9140-1 Stirling Way, Laurel, MD 20723.

In regard to actress/artist Veronica Carlson, the effervescent Hammer heroine (FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED, DRACULA HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE, etc.) whom we profiled in FF 1.1, is offering the sale of her personalized art rendering it's a superb portrait of Peter Cushing, as Baron Frankenstein, and Christopher Lee as Dracula. A private commission for British memorabilia merchant Greg Turnbull prompted Carlson's opulent illustration.

Please note: this poster is a limited edition. Only 500 copies have been produced on high-quality paper, suitable for framing. The eyes of both Lee (red) and Cushing (blue) have been hand-colored by Carlson, who will also sign and number each copy. Write to Veronica Carlson Poster Offer, c/o Island Ideas, 800 Plantation Center, Hilton Head Island, SC 29928.

And last, but very far from least, the latest issue of Dick Klemmensen's amazing 'zine Little Shop of Horrors is currently available. The cover story, "Dracula Has Risen From the Grave: Hammer's Gothic Trilogy," was written by yours truly, so you know it's gonna wind up on your coffee table. As usual for this too-infrequently

published magazine (more like a book, really), it's chock-filled with encyclopedic facts and photos. Write to P.O. Box 3107, Des Moines, Iowa 50316. □

## CAROLINE MUNRO

continued from page 36

splatterfest, MANIAC '80: "That film, sadly or not, did well in the States... well, not sadly for the producers because it made a lot of money. It opened in New York and it



## GOOD TASTE...

A couple of years ago, as a G.I. in Paris, I rented tapes to kill some time. Some of the sci-fi/horror entertainment was forgettable, but a couple of the movies have tagged my memory into replay—I can't get a couple of blondes off my mind. Can you help me? The cartoons were translated entirely into French. Film #1 was a perked piece, something about a farmer finding a Satanic appendage while plowing. This discovery somehow converts the whole venereal community into Satanists. I recognized the blonde "bad girl" (in a futile attempt to seduce a priest, she strips down to her birthday suit) from some Hammer movies. Made in the '60s or '70s, this wasn't your standard erotic thriller tripe—it's still powerful medicine.

Film #2 evoked memories of Hettie Page and artist John Willie; as an "erotic serial," it didn't compromise on its politically incorrect excesses. Plot (?) a stunning, blonde movie starlet is abducted and whisked to a tropical island. She's perpetually nude so the island's populace—cannibals!—can keep an eye on the menu. In the film's finale, white slaves are exterminated and the damsel-in-distress is rescued from the pot—and an amazonian, pop-eyed cannibal who loves women in good taste. My verdict? Junk food, but the blonde was delicious. One hint: the video carton parthenetically linked the starlet to Playboy.

Finally, I'm quite infatuated with actress Denise Duff (SUBSPECIES II & III); what's happening with the beguiling brunette?

Ron Harmon  
Madison, WI

[Film #1] is likely to be *BLOOD ON SATAN'S CLAW*, which has been canonized by critics during the past decade. Unfortunately, reviewers were reluctant to admit their admiration until—not unlike *VAMPIRES, DAUGHTERS OF DARKNESS* and other indies—the film and most of its cast faded into obscurity. Directed by Peter Bogdanovich, the film debuted in 1970 (overseas title: *SATAN'S*

*SKIN*). The tempestuous blonde is Linda Hayden, who actually made only a single Hammer film, *TASTE THE BLOOD OF DRACULA*; check-out her interview in FF 3.5.

Film #3. The "toasty" blonde is probably Ursula Buckfeller (aka Ursula Fellerer), a Playboy Playmate (Oct '79) whose film career was briefly prolific. Buckfeller was directed in three films, all released in 1980, by Jess Franco (aka Clifford Brown): *SADOMANIA, NAKED WITCHES OF THE RIO AMORE* (aka *THE STORY OF LINDA* aka *ORGIA DE NINFORMANAS*), *JUNGFRAU UNTER KANNIBALEN* (aka *DEVIL HUNTER* aka *VIRGIN AMONGST THE CANNIBALS* aka *MAN HUNTER*). We assume that you viewed the latter film in the *Buckfeller* / *Franco* trilogy. She is also credited with some "bikini beach" barfage, including *HOT DOGS AGAIN*.

A British scribe, identified as "The Creation Executives," notes, "The last thing I heard was that Ursula would be showing off her Germanic charms in a B-movie titled *MR. BERSERK*, but if this film was ever released, it seems to have passed me by." Of course, we welcome tips from our readers in regard to Buckfeller's current whereabouts.

Denise Duff, profiled in FF 2-4, has temporarily retired from film to raise her family. We'll keep you posted!

## ...AND GOOD EATON

What a distinct pleasure to have read the FF profile on Shirley Eaton (5-10). The article also brought back so many memories of so many talented actors who had slipped my mind if not my memory. Miss Eaton was the fantasy of so many of us who followed her career. To me, Tim Greaves' article was a huge aspect of wondrous proportion.

So the FF editor gave up smoking! Great going! I keep telling myself that I must do the same, but I've been smoking for 40 years. THAT'S A



One of our favorite vamps, Denise Duff (FF 2-4), has temporarily retired from the screen.

heck of a habit to kick.

Mike Frankovich, Jr.  
(continuing smoker)  
c/o The Film Company  
Glendale, CA

Although I enjoyed reading your April issue's article on Shirley Eaton, *The Golden Girl of GOLDFINGER*, I'm still left with a question. Wasn't it a different woman who was painted gold for the opening credits? If so, is there any chance of FF doing a sidebar on the model for actress?

John Lockwood  
Washington, D.C.

[Margaret Nolan, who was cast in *GOLDFINGER* as "Dink the waitress," also played the Golden Girl in the film's opening and closing credits. By the way, Ms. Nolan originally tested for the Jill Masterson character—but Shirley Eaton eventually earned the role.

Nolan just may surface in our survey of "the sexiest 100 stars," scheduled for publication later this year.]

## AUNTIE CONNIE VS. THE CONSERVATIVES

I am writing to urge your British readers to vote tactically against the Conservative Party in the forthcoming election. Here in Not-So-Great

Britain, some of the films covered in your magazine might as well exist on another planet, thanks to conservative censorship which is the strictest of any country in the modern world. Your "R-rated" films stand little chance of release over here, even if heavily cut; and your unsat films are something beyond the comprehension of anyone living in the prison of "fortress" Britain—"Land of Hope and Glory, Mother of the Free!"

At the last election, literally a few thousand votes in key constituencies would have ousted the conservatives. So, anyone who wants to see more of what is available to FF readers in the U.S.A. must vote tactically for the candidate most likely to defeat their local conservatives—not for their favorite national party, who might figure weakly in certain constituencies.

All politicians must be taught a lesson through the ballot box—namely that censorship is a political hot potato for governments.

Of course, if you're happy to be a repressed and oppressed victim, then don't vote at all!

Auntie Connie  
Not-So-Great Britain

## FAN CLUBS

Send self-addressed and stamped envelopes.

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